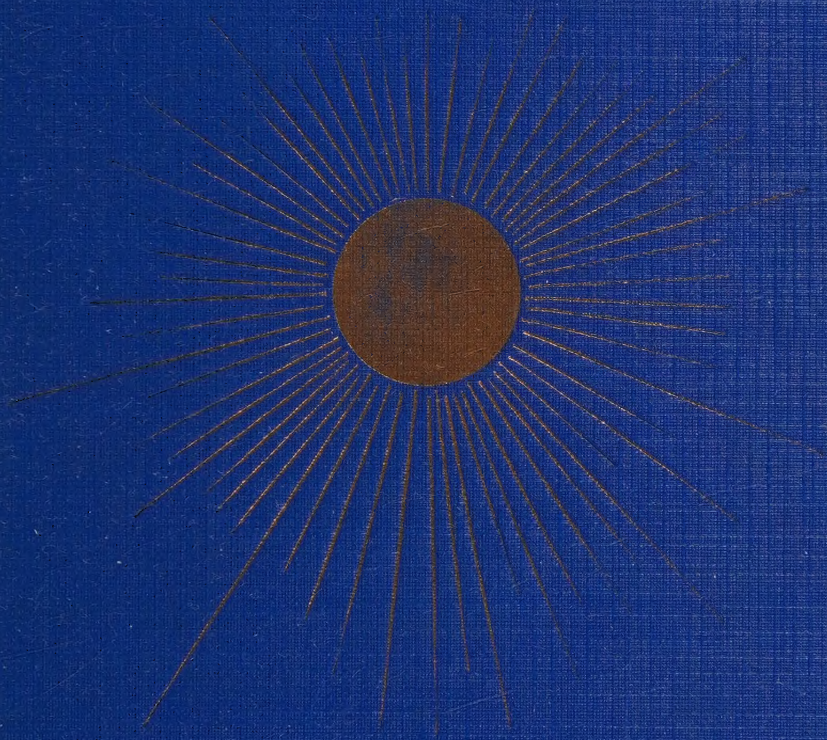
THE LANDS OF THE SUN



BY MARY AUSTIN

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HIS LAST ACT WAS TO WALK TO THE DOORWAY TO LOOK ONCE, A LONG LOOK (*page* 91)

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THE LANDS OF THE SUN

BY

MARY AUSTIN

DISCARD

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PREFACE

TWELVE years ago I was persuaded to write the text for a collection of water-color paintings of California, prepared by Sutton Palmer for A. & C. Black, of London. Although I did not feel confident of being able to do more than supplement Mr. Palmer's work in a manner that would not belie his presentation, there did not at the time seem to be any one writer sufficiently acquainted with the State as a whole, to do any better by it; and I am, perhaps, always too easily persuaded to write about the life of outdoors. I knew the natural aspects of California not well — not with that close-studied intimacy with which I knew that portion of it described in 'The Land of Little Rain' — but generously, as one who must have felt the bones of a country, its structural plan, its compelling contours, before attempting to do justice to its detail. Always immensely taken by the sculptural quality of the landscape, its moulding lines of

force, its lofty certitudes and vast undulating rhythm, I had very early in my acquaintance with it traced out on foot, on horseback, by motor and rail and wagon track, its salient ranges and cradling intervales, and learned to recognize its prevailing ground cover and local color note. At the time of that first writing, I was, so to speak, enamoured of all the California coast, but not — as it turned out destined never to be — married to it. I had, in writing about its mere appearance, the same sort of pleasure a lover takes in sketching the lineaments of a beloved in moments of leisure.

The book, as sumptuously printed and published by Messrs. Black, was called 'California,' taking its place in a long series of similarly painted and described travel volumes. In deference to the writer's sense of shortcoming there was inserted a sub-title, 'The Land of the Sun,' from a Spanish proverb to the effect that the lands of the sun expand the soul. For I knew very well that all I should be able to render competently would be that sense of spiritual dilation which

the surpassing beauty of California of thirty and forty years ago produced on all who were happy enough to be exposed to it. I could describe, not California, but, by means of a few points of familiarity, its effect, so that the book might easily have been called by any other phrase discriminating between what the land might be in actuality and what it seemed to any lover of it. At the same time, I was so aware of the neglect of certain aspects of *el pais del sol*, and of unacquaintance with others, that I made in 1914, when it finally appeared, a provision for a later edition which would more nearly justify the title; never dreaming that out of the events set in motion that epoch-marking year — 1914 — would drift an obscuring cloud cutting the writer off, as it now seems inevitably, from the choice of the soul. As a matter of fact, I never did come to know California as a whole any better than I did when this was first written. And there might not have been any second edition had it not turned out that the lovely land itself has suffered a stroke of destiny. If I never came to know any more,

at least nobody has appeared who knew it so well before it was preëmpted and overrun by what is probably the most impotent — culturally and spiritually impotent — society that has yet got itself together in any quarter of the United States.

It will only be after another generation or two has fruited in the rhyming valleys and along the marching slopes of Southern California that anybody will be able to say what happened — and why — to that region in the years between my first coming to it in 1888, fresh with youth and with appreciations of beauty pointed by classic standards, and the present writing. It would be unfair to say what one feels of the immediate aspect of what was its most entrancing earlier effect, since the present status of Southern California is so obviously one of transition, an awkward stage, let us hope, of a completely adequate maturity. What *seems* to have happened to it is much the sort of thing that might have happened to a bargain counter in which lovely and fragile things have been offered for sale to shoppers whose lust for possession has

taken no account of the evanescent quality of goods so snatched from hand to hand. But to suggest that the bargain counter rush, which has overwhelmed so much, irrecoverably, of the magic appeal of the southland of the coast country, is peculiar to California would belie the hope that can be visibly derived from the circumstance that Southern California, more than any other section of the United States to which this has happened, is itself becoming aware of what it has done, and is moving of its own initiative to the remedy. It is only because it now appears that such a movement toward revaluation has begun that the writer is encouraged to issue an American edition. For much of what is set down in it is so largely reminiscent of the beauty and charm of the country between San Diego and Monterey that my account of it has the value, cumulative in time, of a keepsake.

This is a picture of my beloved when she was maiden, when I was still so full of the effect of her, so bemused by her beauty, and entranced with her charm that I neglected to know her in reality as now I never can. And

yet, slightly as I knew the form and frame of that country — the great interior oval between the curving ranges, the broken ranks of hills trailing east and south — it was always geographically complete for me, as complete as a woman whose very draperies and ornaments have become a part of her. Always peculiarly susceptible to the rhythmic constitution of the landscape, there was seldom an hour when I could not turn from all my poor affairs to the living shape and pulse of the land as to some refulgent personality. Waking at night, far away in Lone Pine, I would be aware of the tide pushing up Carquinez Straits to Suisun, and the rolling amber river thrusting toward the bay. Or if, from some Sierra peak I watched the rains, I knew in what shut valley to the west, along what foothill slopes dipping to the San Joaquin, what flowers burst to bloom, what boughs bent down with swelling fruit. Even across the continent the land worked a miracle; for we are told that no one ever dreams of color; but the first two or three winters in New York, turning from its drab unloveli-

ness, I used to dream of the blue of Carmel Bay, blue lifting to chrysoprase and breaking white to foam.

Sensing the country thus as a whole, I found it so satisfying that I overlooked much of detail, much of intimate, appealing fact. Still at intervals those missed items of delight shimmer on the mind's horizon with a beckoning sense of loss. As if more were lost than can ever be touched again. Lost only to me, perhaps, for though I wake at night from dreaming of it, to the persistent hope that some turn of affairs will bring me in touch with it again, it cannot be that somewhere in the blue mesas back of San Diego Bay, or the veiled cañons of the Sierra Madre, the word, the never quite pronounced word, does not still lisp from fragile trumpets of the mimulus. It is to the recovery of that lost magic of beauty that the culture of Southern California must now address itself. And if it discovers its final expression in the modern means of architecture and aqueducts and community conduct rather than in verse and prose and paint, I, for one, shall not complain

of it. It may well be that my own generation was also, quite unaware, cursed with the modern passion for scientific exactitude, for knowing the learned name for every flower, the ornithological affiliations of every song bird in the bush, which is the writer's equivalent for materialistic expression. Perhaps as much by these things as by the lust for material exploitation, we allowed the magic of the earlier time to escape.

So much of apology is due to the reader who takes up this book under the impression that it covers the whole of *el pais del sol*, or is reprinted in America, slightly revised from the English edition, with any other claim to uniqueness than arises from the impossibility of its ever being done again from the same model. Too much of what I describe has utterly vanished, too much more has utterly changed, so blatant and bristling with triumph over the unresisting beauty of the wild, that it would be difficult indeed for one to lose himself in that delighted sense of the whole which was the special privilege of those who came to California in the last quarter of the

last century and before it. In two or three generations, when towns have taken on the tone of time, and the courageous wild has reëstablished itself in by-lanes and corners, a writer may be born, instinctively at one with his natural environment, and so able to give satisfying expression to that wholeness. In the meantime let this book stand as a marker, if for no more than the sketched pattern of a suggested recovery.

MARY AUSTIN

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THE SPARROW HAWK'S OWN

THE LANDS OF THE SUN

THE SPARROW HAWK'S OWN

For a graphic and memorable report of the contours of any country, see always the aboriginal account of its making. That will give you the lie of the land as no geographer could sketch it forth for you. California was made by Padahoon, the Sparrow Hawk, and the Little Duck who brooded on the face of the waters in the Beginning of Things.

There is no knowing where the tale comes from, for Winnenáp, the Medicine Man who told it to me, was eclectic in his faiths as in his practice. Winnenáp was a Shoshone, one of the group who had been forced southward into Death Valley when the great Paiute Nation had split their tribes like a wedge. In one of their ancient wars he had been held as a hostage by the Piutes and brought up by them. He might have remembered the story, or his wife might have told him. She was

a tall brown woman out of Tejon, and *her* mother was of that band of captives taken from San Gabriel by the Mojaves, Mission-bred. Wherever it came from, the tale has its roots deep in the land it explains.

Padahoon being wearied, going to and fro under the heavens, said to the Little Duck that it was time there should be mountains; so the Little Duck dove and brought up the primordial mud of which even the geographers are agreed mountains are made.

As the Little Duck brought it, the Sparrow Hawk built a round beautiful ring of mountains enclosing a quiet space of sea. Said the Little Duck, 'I choose this side,' coming up with his bill full of mud toward the west. Whereupon the Sparrow Hawk built the other side higher. When it was all done and the Little Duck surveyed it, he observed, as people will to this day, the discrepancy between the low western hills and the high Sierras, and he thought the builder had not played him fair.

'Very well, then,' said the Sparrow Hawk, 'since you are resolved to be so greedy'— and

he bit out pieces of the Sierras with his bill, and threw them over his shoulder.

You can see the bites still deep and sharp about Mount Whitney.

But the Little Duck would not be satisfied, so he took hold by the great bulk of Shasta and began to pull, and Padahoon pulled on his side until the beautiful ring was pulled out in a long oval and began to break on the side where the bay of San Francisco comes in. So they were forced to divide it north and south and make what they could of it. But the Sparrow Hawk, remembering the pieces he had thrown over his shoulder, chose the south, where you can still see him sailing any clear day, about four in the afternoon, over all his stolen territory.

There you have the bones of the land as neatly laid out for you as they could do it in Kensington Museum; the long oval, breaking seaward, the high, bitten, westward peaks, and the Sparrow Hawk's own, tailing south like the quirk of an attenuated Q.

They serve, these fragmentary ranges, for the outposts of habitableness between the sea

wind and the regions of pure desertness. Always there is skirmish and assault going on about them. Showers rush up the slope of San Jacinto, all their shining spears atilt. Great gusts of wind roar through the Pass of San Gorgiono, the old Puerto de San Carlos. Seasonally they are beleaguered by stealthy rushes of the fogs that, from the Gulf, hear the peaks about Whitney calling, or by the yellow murk of sandstorms on which the whole face of the desert is lifted up as it travels toward its destiny in orchard row and vineyard. Always the edge of the wind is against the stone. They shine, the frontlets of the sentinel saints, in that keen polish, as the faces of saints must with benignity.

The desert winds along the eastern bases of the range in deep, indented bays, white-rimmed with the wave marks of its ancient sea. Out a very little way beyond the pilæ of the broken mountains, where the shuddering heat waves trick the imagination, the land seems about to be retaken by the ghost of tumbling billows. Nothing else moves in it, nothing sounds.

Plantations of growing things near the Pass lean all a little toward it, edging, peering. The wild, spiny, thorny things of the desert struggling to enter the rain-fed paradise, the full-leaved offspring of the sea wind plotting to take the unfriended, sandy spaces. They creep a little forward or back as the years run wet or dry. The green things stand up, they march along the cliffs, they balance on the edge of precipices, but desperation is in every contorted stem of mesquite and palo verde. And with all this struggle, so still! East, on the desert rim, the Colorado ramps like a stallion between its walls, westward the Pacific rings the low foreshore with thunder; but the land never cries out. Quartz mountains disintegrate, but they do not murmur.

It is odd here, in a land rife with the naked struggle of great pagan forces, to find the promontories so lend themselves to the gentle names of saints. Perhaps the Padres were not so far from nature as one thinks. In the southerly range, which, with San Bernardino on the north, shores up the Pass, they rendered for once the pagan touch. San Jacinto — Saint

Hyacinth — was he ever anything but a Christianized memory of a Grecian myth, or does it matter at all so long as there are men to see, in the deep purple light that dies along the heights, the color of blood that is shed for love? Perhaps the best thing beauty can say to Greek or Christian is that there are still things worth dying for. No doubt the veins of Padre Jayme Bravo were as rich in martyr passion as the stained air of the mountain is in purples, paling to rose at morning, thinning at noon to pure aërial blues.

Seen from the coast, the range has a finny contour as of some huge creature risen from the sea, low hills about it like dolphins playing. But the prevailing note of the landscape is always blue, repeating the tints of the wild hyacinth that may be found on the lomas early in April, sending up its clustered heads between two slender, curving spears.

Near at hand the masking growth is seen to be green, the dark secretive green of the chamisal. Nowhere does one get the force of the Spanish termination *al* — the place where — as in that word. The chamisal is the place

of the chamiso: miles and miles of it, with scarcely another shrub allowed, spread over the mesa and well up into laps and bays of the hills. It grows breast-high, man-high in the favored regions, but even where, under the influence of drouth and altitude, it creeps to the knees, it abates nothing of its social character. Its evergreen foliage has a dull shining from the resinous coating which protects it from evaporation, and a slight sticky feel, characteristics that no doubt won it the name of 'greasewood' from the emigrants who valued it chiefly because it could be burned green. The spring winds blowing up from the bay whip all its fretted surface to a froth of panicled white bloom, that, stirring a little as the wind shifts, full of bee-murmur, touches the imagination with the continual reminder of the sea. Higher up the thick, lacy chaparral flecks and riffles, showing the light underside of leaves, and tosses up great fountain sprays of ceanothus, sea-blue and lilac-scented.

All the human interest of this region centers about the city on the bay of San Diego: a low locked harbor with a long spit of sand break-

ing the mild Pacific swell as it bides its time for the shipping of the southwestern world. It has already waited longer than most people suppose. Just fifty years after the landing of Columbus on the Bahamas, Cabrillo discovered it. Sir Francis Drake, romping up that coast with his buccaneers, must have seen it, though he left no note of any visit, and in 1602 Sebastian Viscaino anchored there and gave San Diego Bay its present name.

In the meantime the Spanish, drifting northward along the mainland of Mexico, had proved that the fabled California is not an island, but the arm of a true continent. Alarcon, as a Son of the Sun, had sailed up the Rio Colorado as far as the Needles. The Jesuits had colonized Baja California. About the time the mixed Dutch and English on the Atlantic coast were beginning to think of themselves as Americans and to act accordingly, the Franciscan *frailes* settled on San Diego Bay. Nobody will know why it was reserved for the brown-skirted brothers of Saint Francis to undertake the subjugation of Alta California until it is known why the King of Spain quarreled

with the Jesuits. They were accused of plotting against His Majesty, but in those days it was possible to accuse the Jesuits of almost anything without going very far wrong in the popular estimate. I have my own opinion about it, which is that a great land, like a great lady, has her way with men. And no land has called its own as California, poet or painter stuff, or pioneer, the world's rim under. No better patron could be found for this blossoming West than Francis of Assisi, who preached to his little brothers of the air and would have made a convert of the coyote. Perhaps the first settlers of a country leave their stripe on all the land's later offspring. If this were a way the West took to breed fervor and faith and the spirit of prophecy in the young generation, who shall say she has not succeeded?

At any rate, the Jesuits were expelled from the peninsula, and the Brown-Gowns — for so the Franciscans were called by the wild neophytes — admitted to their missions and the prospective conquest of the mainland.

In January of 1769, two expeditions, by

land and sea, set forth in the name of God and the King of Spain, under the patronage of Señor San José, indubitable patron of all journeys since the flight into Egypt. In April the ship San Antonio anchored in the placid bay, there to await the flocks driven up under charge of Junipero Serra from Velicatá. So the Old World came to the New with a whole collocation of sainted personages flocking like doves to her banners.

But it was not saints that the land wanted so much as the stuff that goes to make them. The expedition starved, sickened, their eyes were holden. Governor Portola, with the greater part of his company, made a long *paseo* on foot to find the lost port of Monterey, and came back with armor rust on his doublet sleeves and nothing much gained beside, to declare the expedition a failure. What had happened was easy to explain in that land of heavy fogs and uncertain rains. Only on clear days the great sweep of Monterey declares itself a bay; only in wet years Carmel River breaks through its bar and adds its waters to the sea. Food and courage being

low, the Governor was for a fleet return. But Padre Serra, Junipero Serra, father president of Missions, juniper of God's own planting, sapling of that stock of which the founder of the order had wished for a whole forest full, Padre Serra claimed a churchman's privilege. He demanded time for a *novena*, a nine days' cycle of prayer to the patron who was so unaccountably hiding the relief ship in the fogs and indecisions of the uncharted coast. It is my belief that the Padre chose the *novena* simply because it was the longest possible time he could hope to delay the return of the expedition. Nine days they drew in their belts and told their beads, and on the last hour of the last day, far on the sea rim, behold the white wings of succor!

The patron, who could never be at a loss for an expedient, contrived that the relief ship should lose an anchor which compelled it to put in at San Diego, where they had no expectation of finding any of the party. It was so that the land tried out the expedition and approved, for from that day the founding went forward steadily.

There is a fine growing city now, on the site of the early landing, regularly stratified through all the architectural periods of California, from the low thick-walled adobe of the Spanish occupation to the newest imitation Spanish hacienda of the latest one-lunged millionaire. But the land has not lost, in the century and a half, one mark by which the brown-skirted *frailes* found their way about in it. It has its distinctive note, the Sparrow Hawk's seal of a private, peculiar affection. Here, about the mouth of one of its swift seasonal rivers, touching as with a finger-tip the opposing shore of the island of Santa Rosa, is the habitat of the Torrey Pine. Japanesque, unrelated, drinking the sea air, never spreading inland, it hugs the sea-worn ledges of La Jolla, as though, as some botanists believe, the species came to life there out of the jewel-tinted water and the live desert dust. Others think it the relict of the land of which the broken Channel Islands are the ruined tips. In either case it is a pity that science has not retained for this unique restricted species the name the Franciscans gave it, *soledad*, the

solitary. Behind the town the mesa rises abruptly, knife-cut by the gullies of intermittent streams, and far back, where the mountains break down into foothills and these into the lomas — little low mounds of detritus — the sea air collects all the blue rays of the diffused light and holds them there all day in the hollows, in memory of the sea from which they rose.

In April of the year of the Occupation, the white panicles of the chamiso would be tossing here and there and the yellow violets run thin lines as of fire among the grasses. You would not believe there were so many yellow violets in the world as a day's riding will still show you. At this season, *Islay*, the wild cherry, will be shaking out its fine white spray of bloom, the button willow begins, the sycamore, the buckthorn, *cascara sagrada*. The great-berried *manzanita*, which shed its waxen bells as early as December, will be reddening its apples. Here also the *chia*, the true sage, the honey-maker, bread of the wild tribes, makes itself known by the penetrating, pungent odor of its pubescent foliage. Binding all the leafy

thickets, runs the succulent, starry bloom of the *megarrhiza* that from its hidden root, as large as a man's body, sends up smothering tendrils so sensitive to their opportunity that you have only to sit down beside them, one of these long, growing afternoons, to find all their tips moving sensibly across the grass in your direction. As early as February the foot-long vines can be seen locating the nearest shrub or the cañon wall, farther away than you could detect it by any tactile sense. And how quickly, once the objective is sensed, the questing Force is withdrawn from the unsuccessful members! Perhaps this stem to the right may keep on in the direction in which it has caught the invisible communicating thread from the nearest buckthorn. But the other three or four green tentacles, finding no invitation from any quarter, not only stop growing, but seem to shrink and dwindle in the interests of the climbing brother. Sometimes, in a particularly lusty growth, all the young vines will be drawn toward one conspicuous support, so that by the third day those that lay out starlike, with tips raised a

little, delicately inquiring, will swing through all their points to the one hopeful direction. These warm sensuous days toward the end of April, just after rain, when the very earth is full of a subtle intoxication, one has but to thrust a finger among the bourgeoning tips and tendrils of the megarrhiza to see them stir with live response. One must suppose, since the wild cucumber is of no discoverable use to anybody, that the Force uses it, an ascending, uprearing Force, rehearsing itself for a more serviceable instrument.

What the Franciscans saw first in Alta California was what all pioneers look for in new lands, the witness of their faith. They saw the wax-berry bush from which they were to gather the thin coating of the berries into candles for their improvised altars, saw the crepitant, aromatic *yerba buena* and the shrubby, glutinous-leaved herb of the Saints, given to them for healing.

More than all else they must have seen in the month of the Virgin Mother, high on the altar slopes of San Jacinto and San Bernardino, the white thyrsi of the yucca, called 'The

Candles of Our Lord.' Back where the green exclusiveness of the chamiso gives place to the chaparral, the tall shafts arise. They grow in blossoming, the bells climbing with the aspiring stalk until as many as six thousand of them may hang pure and stiffly along the lancelike stem between the bayonet bristling leaves. Long after the white flame has burnt out, the stalks remain, rank on rank, as though battalions of Spanish spearmen had fallen there, holding each his spear aloft in his dead hand.

It is only back here where the yuccas begin that the small, swift life of the mesa goes on, very much as it did in the days of the Spanish *frailes*. The doves begin it, voicing the mesa dawn in notes of a cool blueness, then the sleek and stately quail moving down in twittering droves to the infrequent waterholes. The rhythm of a flock in motion is like the ripple of muscles in the sides of a great snake. After them the road-runner, *corredor del camino*, the cock of the chaparral, crest down, rudder aslant, swifter than a horse, incarnate spirit of the hopeful dust through

which he flirts and flits. Then the blueness is folded up, it lies packed in the cañons, the mountains flatten. High in his airy haunts the Sparrow Hawk sails, and the furry, frisk-tailed folk begin the day's affairs.

The secret of learning the mesa life is to sit still, and to sit still, and to keep on sitting still. The only other secret is to be learned in the wattled huts stuck like the heaps of the housebuilding rats in the dry washes, except for size scarcely distinguishable from them. For the Indian has gone through all that green woof with the thread of kinship, and found it an ordered world. He is choke-full as the chamisal is of wild life, of the tag ends of instincts and understandings left over from the days when he was brother to the beast. Those sleek-bellied rats, stealing to lay another foot-long dried stick to the characterless heap of their dwelling; bad Indians to him, trying to remember their ways when they were men. That brown feathered bunch, in and out of the chia bush — she was present at the making of man. Your aboriginal has the true sense of proportion; not size, but vitality.

You can cover the sage wren with the hollow of your hand, but you cannot hop so far for your size nor be so brave about it.

Very different from the spring flutter and fullness must have been the look of the land in the year of the martyrdom of Padre Jayme Bravo, which was the year of Bunker Hill and the Republic. The green of the chamisal was overlaid then by the brown tones of its seeding. Islay had shed its crimson drupes, the cactus fires had died down to the dull purples of the fruiting prickly pear. The sycamores by the dwindling waters of the arroyo had scarcely a palsied leaf to wag. The Mission had been moved, for what reasons must be guessed by whoever has had occasion to observe the effect of a standing army on subjugated peoples, back from the sea marsh to a little valley of what is known now as Mission River. Sixty converts had come down out of the hills to receive the Medicine of the Soft-Hearted God. That is the way they must have looked at it — rood and cup and sprinkling water and the bells louder than the medicine drums. Back in the dry gullies the drums

would have been going night and day where the *tingaivashes*, the Medicine Men, lashed themselves into a fury over this apostasy. Certain of the renegades heard them between their orisons; they fled back to the muttering roll of *tombes* and the pound of dancing feet. In the night following, eight hundred of the Diegueños, clothed in frantic fervor and very little else, came down to make an end of the 'Brown-Gowns.'

How the soul of Padre Jayme must have leaped up as he heard them yelling outside his unguarded hut; the appetite for martyrdom is deeper than all our dreaming. He ran toward them with arms extended. 'Love God, my children!' he cried, and received their arrows. When it was reported to the Padre Presidente at Monterey, 'Thank God,' he said. 'Now the soil is watered.' It did indeed repay them such a crop of souls as any watering produces in that soil. But at San Juan Capistrano, where a new foundation was in progress, on the news of martyrdom, the *frailes* buried the bells and returned to the presidio.

Few people understand why Californians so love their Missions, the meager ruins of them, scant as a last year's nest. But two priests, a corporal, and three men in the unmapped land, with eight hundred angry savages — it is the mark of the Western breed to love odds such as that! It is not to the campanile at Pala nor the ruined arches of San Luis Rey that men make pilgrimages, but to the spirit of enterprise that built the West.

All about the upper mesa there are traces, scarcely more evident to the eye than the Missions, that the inhabitants of it have been dreamers, dreaming greatly. I do not refer now to the court of San Luis Rey, from the roofs of which a joyous populace once cheered a governor of California in the part of *toreador*, in a neighborhood where Raphael-eyed *muchachitos*, who have never heard of the Five Little Pigs that Went to Market, will repeat you the rhyme that begins

> Up in Heaven there is a bull-fight,
> The bull has horns of silver and a tail of gold.

Heaven enough under those conditions to

the children of the Occupation! Nor am I thinking of a road on which, when there is a light wind moving from the sea, you can still hear at midnight the pounding feet of the Indian riders galloping down to the bay, only to see their beloved Padre blessing them from the ship's side in departing. I do not think even — because I make a practice of thinking as little as possible of a matter so little creditable to us as our Indian policy — of the procession of the evicted Palingtawas, even though the whole region of Warner's ranch is still full of the shame of it and the rending cry. The brave little towns which start up there with their too early florescence of avenue and public square, the courageous acres which the vineyardist clears in the chamisal and the chamiso takes again! The struggle of men with men is at best a sick and squalid affair for one of the parties; but men contriving against the gods for possession of the earth is your true epic. All along the upper mesa Pan and the homesteader keep up the ancient fight. And with what unequaled weapons! The wild gourd, the bindweed, the megar-

rhiza, at the mere rumor of a cleared space, come beckoning and joining hands. Though he goes gunning all day without finding one young rabbit for his pot, the bark of the homesteader's orchard trees will be gnawed by them at the precise sappy moment. At dawn the quail may be heard with soft, contented noises between the rows of bearing vines, plunging their beaks into the ripest berries. Then the mule deer will spend the night in the carefully fenced enclosure, ruining with selective bites the largest bunches; after which the homesteader, if he is wise, will know that he is beaten. The mule deer can go over any fence, though usually he prefers to go between the wires, which he can do without altering his stride. Detected, the antlered chaparral, even at its most leafless, makes cover for him until, after hours of following, he is glimpsed at last, scaling at his stiff, bounding gait, some inaccessible rocky stair from which nothing comes back but the bullet's deflected whine. Now and then some pot hunter who remembers when the mule deer could be heard barking to the does in any deep gully, when

the moon rose hot on the flushed trail of the day in October, will tell you that there are no more of his kind on San Jacinto. But so long as there are homesteads to be fended from the hill borders, the mule deer will come back. And when the mule deer is gone there will still be drouth. Let the coast currents swing out a few degrees or the Gulf winds blow contrarily for consecutive seasons and the stoutest homesteader fails. After a few years you can guess where he has been by finding the chamiso growing taller in the ploughed places.

Incurable wild hills and wild sufficing sea and the little strip between, which they give to one another — Indian giving! — fields conceded by the years of rain and demanded back by drouth, shoals that the tide piles and the sea eats again! Thus the San Diego foreshore lies like a many-colored dancer's scarf, and hearts are still caught in its folds as in the days of the Spanish Occupation.

There's a strip of aquamarine turning to chrysoprase — that's for the sea; amber then for the hollow cliffs of La Jolla and San Juan,

smugglers' cliffs eaten well under the shore; a stripe of scarlet, spangled with fine viscid dew — that's for the *mesembryanthemum* crowding the foreshore. Then pale green of the lupines with a white thread through it of the highway; green again for the chamisal and blue of the mountains' unassailable sea thought.

Nature is a great symbolist; what she makes out of her own materials is but the shadow of what man in any country will make finally of his. San Diego by the sea, dreams of a great sea empery. What by all the signs she is bound to produce, is a poet. There in the scarf-colored low shore is the vocal forecast of him in the night-singing mocking-bird. Especially in the fringing island of Coronado, out of the wax-berry bush he can be heard gurgling like a full fountain with jets and rushes of pure crystal sound. From moonrise on until dawn he scatters from a tireless throat music like light and laughter. It is as impossible to close the eyes under it as against the glare of the sun. And if the moon has fed all her light in stars to the pursuing sun, still he sings, all his notes muffled by the dark. He sways and sings,

dozes and sings, dreaming and wakes to sing. So it should be with poets whether anybody wants them to or not. 'The Lands of the Sun expand the soul,' says the proverb.

MOTHERING MOUNTAINS

It is all part of that subtle relation between the observer and the landscape of the West, which goes by the name of 'atmosphere,' that one returns again and again to the reality of Christian feeling in the Franciscan pioneers, as witnessed by the names they left us; — one of the most charming proofs, if proof were wanted, of the power of religion to illuminate the mind to a degree often denied to generations of art and culture. How many book-fed tourists, rounding the blue flanks of San Jacinto to face the noble front of the Coast Range, swinging back from the San Gabriel Valley, would have found for it a name at once so absolute, so understanding as Sierra Madre, Mother Mountain?

There you have it all in one comprehensive sweep, the brooding, snow-touched, virginal peaks, visited and encompassed by the sacred spirit of the sea, and below it the fertile valley, the little, huddling, skirting hills fed from

her breast. The very lights that die along the slopes, the airs that play there, the swelling, fecund slopes have in them something so richly maternal; the virtue of the land is the virtue that we love most to attribute to the mothers of men. And if you want facts under the poetry, see how the Sierra receives the rain and sends it down laden with the rich substance of her granite bosses, making herself lean to fatten the valleys. The great gorges and swift angles of the hills, which fade and show in the evening glow, are wrought there by ceaseless contributions of the mountain to the tillable land. And what a land it has become! There have been notable kingdoms of the past, of fewer and less productive acres. Yet, even in the great avenues of palms that flick the light a thousand ways from their wind-stirred, serrate edges, is a hint of the host of bristling, spiny growth the land once entertained. It is as if the sinister forces of the desert lurked somewhere not far under the surface, ready to retake all this wonder of fertility at any moment should the beneficence of the Mother Mountain fail. The Padre pio-

neers must have felt these two contending forces many a time when they lay down at night under the majestic Sierra, for they named the first spot where they made an abiding place, in honor of the protecting influence, *Nuestra Señora, Reina de Los Angeles*, Our Lady the Queen of the Angels. There she hovered, snow-whitened amid tall candles of the stars, while south and west the coyote barked the menace of the unwatered lands. Now this is remarkable — and one of the things that go to show we are vastly more susceptible to influences of nature than some hard-headed members of society suppose — that the most conspicuous human achievement in this group of low hills and shallow valleys lying between the Sierra Madre and the sea has been a new form of domestic architecture.

This is the thing that most strikes the attention of the traveler; not the orchards and the gardens, which are not appreciably different in kind from those of the Riviera and some favored parts of Italy, but the homes, the number of them, their extraordinary

adaptability to the purposes of gracious living. The Angeleños call them bungalows, in respect to the type from which they developed, but they deserve a name as distinctive as they have in character become. These little thin-walled dwellings, all of desert-tinted native woods and stones, are as indigenous to the soil as if they had grown up out of it, as charming in line and perfection of utility as some of those wild growths which show a delicate, airy florescence above ground, but under it have deep, man-shaped resistant roots. With their low and flat pitched roofs they present a certain likeness to the aboriginal dwellings which the Franciscans found scattered like wasps' nests among the chaparral along the river, which is only another way of saying that the spirit of the land shapes the art that is produced there. It is only latterly that man has mixed the simplicity of type with architectural invention that it becomes absurd.

One must pause a little over this river, so long ago turned into an irrigating ditch that it is only in seasons of unusual flood that it remembers its ancient banks, and finds them

in spite of all that real estate agencies have done to obliterate such natural boundaries. This river of Los Angeles betrays the streak of original desertness in the country by flowing bottom-side up, for which it receives the name of *arroyo*, and even *arroyo seco* as against the *rio* of the full-flowing Sacramento and San Joaquin. A *rio* is chiefly water, but an arroyo, and especially that one which travels farthest from the Mothering Mountains toward the sea, is, at most seasons of the year, a small trickle of water among stones in a wide, deep wash overgrown with button willow and sycamores that click their gossiping leaves in every breath of wind or in no wind at all. Tiny gold and silver-backed ferns climb down the banks to drink, and as soon as the spring freshet has gone by, brodiæas and blazing stars come up between the boulders worn as smooth as if by hand.

Farther up, where the stream narrows, it is overgrown by willows, alders, and rock maples, and leaps white-footed into brown pools for trout. Deer drink at the shallows, and it is not so long ago that cinnamon bear and griz-

zlies tracked the wet clay of its borders. This is the guarantee that this woman-country is in no danger of too much mothering. No climate which is acceptable to trout and grizzlies is in the least likely to prove enervating; men and beasts, they run pretty much to the same vital, sporting qualities.

All that country which extends from the foot of the Sierra Madre to the sea is so cunningly patterned off with ranks of low hills and lomas that its vastness is disguised, or rather, revealed by subtle change and swift surprises as a discreet woman reveals her charm. This renders it one of the most delightful of motoring countries. The car swings over a perfect road into snug little orchard nooks as safe and secret-seeming as a nest; climbs a round-breasted hill to greet the wide horizon of the sea, or a mesa stretching away into blue and amber desertness, which when adventured upon discloses, in unsuspected hollows, white, peaceful towns girt by great acres of orange groves or the orderly array of vines, trimmed low and balancing like small, wide-skirted figures in a minuet.

And then the ground opens suddenly to deep dry gullies where little handfuls of the gray soil gather themselves up and scuttle mysteriously under the cactus bushes, and seeds of the megarrhiza rattle with a muffled sound as the pods blow about. Here one meets occasionally the last survivors of the old way of life before men found it — *neotoma*, the house-building rat, with his conical heap of rubbish, or a road-runner, tilting his tail and practicing his short, sharp runs in the powdery sand under the rabbit brush. Here, too, the lurking desert shows its spiny tips, like a half-buried creature, not dead, but drowsing.

As artists know color and poets know it, this is the most colorful corner of the world. The blue and silver tones of the Sparrow Hawk's land give place to airy violets, fawns and rich ambers. It is curious, that obstinate preference which a locality has for color schemes of its own adoption: man can break up and reform them, but he can never quite overcome the original key. Here the bright, instant note of the geraniums that shore up the bungalows, even the insult of the magenta-

colored bougainvillæa, is subdued by the aërial softness that lies along the hills like the bloom on fruit. The sheets of Eschscholtzia gold, that once spread over miles of the San Gabriel Valley and still lingers in torn fragments about Altadena, have been sheared by the plough, to vanish and reappear again in the solid globes of orange distilled from the saps and juices of the soil.

One of the most interesting of the instruments, by which the cultivated landscape has gathered up and fixed the evanescent greens that spread thinly yet over the uncropped hills in spring, is the eucalyptus. All the tints are there, from the olive greens of the chaparral to the somber darkness of the evergreen oak; young shoots of it have the silvery finish of the Artemisia which once gave the note of the mesas about Riverside and San Bernardino. No other imported tree has quite to such a degree the air of the habitué: one wonders, indeed, if it could have been half so much at home in Australia whence it has returned, like some wandering heir to the ancestral acre. The eucalyptus family proves

its blood royal by its facile adaptiveness to the prevailing lines of the landscape, taking the rounded, leaning outline of the live-oaks on the wind-driven hills, or in sheltered ravines springing upward straight as the silver firs. Perhaps its most charming possibilities are revealed in the middle distance, where, lifted high on columnar stems, its leaf crowns take on the blunt, flowing contours of the hills. At all times it has a beautiful resilience to the wind, bowing with a certain courtliness without compulsion, and recovering as if by conscious harmonious movement. The pepper tree, however, most magnificent specimens of which could once be found lining the avenues of Pasadena, or in some unexpected corner of the hills marking the site of some old Spanish hacienda, is always an alien. It is like the Spaniards who brought it, perhaps, in its drooping grace, in the careless prodigality with which it sheds its fragile crimson fruits. Something of Old-Worldliness persists in its spicy odors, and in the stir of its lacy shadows; when the moon comes over the mountain wall and the wind

is moving, there is the touch of mystery one associates with lovely señoritas leaning out of balconies. One fancies that the pepper tree will last so long as the dying race of Dons and Doñas, and with them will cease to be a feature of local interest.

There is hardly more than a trace in the modern city of Los Angeles, of *Nuestra Señora, Reina de Los Angeles*. The last time I passed through the old plaza, the Streets of Offense encroached upon it from the east, and a corner of the sacred precinct had been sacrificed to the trolley. The Church of Our Lady, over whose door may still be traced the fading inscription from which the city takes its name, was never a Mission, but one of the six chapels or *asistencias* centered about the Mission San Gabriel. It was here the first expedition passing northward looking for the port of Monterey, rested on the day of the feast of Our Lady, in the year when the Atlantic Colonies were making up their minds to fight the English. Close to this spot and along Downey Street were enacted the most pitiful of all the tragic incidents which marked

the recession of the aboriginal races. Bereft of their lands and the protection of their church, the Indians became a prey to the greed of the dominant peoples, and used regularly to be incited to drunkenness upon their wages on Sunday, arrested while in that condition and sold each Monday morning for the amount of their fines to the neighboring ranchers. Things like this lurking under the surface of commercial enterprise, as the desert lies in wait in sandy stretches, advise us that much of our insistence on democracy grows out of our inability to trust ourselves to deal equitably with our fellows under any other conditions. We can keep to the rules of the game we have set up more easily than to the unfenced humanities. Here in the old plaza full of sleepy light, which still retains the indefinable stamp of the people to whom to-morrow was always a better day for doing things, one sighs for the short-sighted self-interest which so wasted the native children of the soil.

But after all the land couldn't have loved them as it does the race for which it brings forth its miraculous harvests. Not that there

weren't miracles in those days; in fact they began here, or rather at San Gabriel, six miles or so beyond the river, which in those days was called *Porciuncula*, a name that linked the Old World with the New by way of the little chapel in Italy in which the beloved Francis received such heavenly favors. The miracle of San Gabriel relates to a display of a canvas presentiment of Our Lady, at the mere sight of which the wild tribes experienced exceeding grace.

Looking up suddenly at the Mother Mountain brooding above the plain, it is easy to understand how the symbol of aloof but solicitous care came home to the primitive mind, always peculiarly open to suggestions of humanness in nature.

The heads of the Sierra Madre are rounded, the contours of great dignity. The appeal they make to the eye is of mass and line. The charms of the Mother range — and it has many, of forested slope, leaping waters, and lilied meadows — do not offer themselves to the casual glance, but must be sought after with great pains. The bulk of the range is of warm

gray granite, clothed with atmospheric color as with a garment. It borrows more from the sky than the sea, taking on at times an aërial transparency, the soul of the mountain about to pass trembling into light. Pinkish tones are discoverable in even the bluest shadows, and at times the peaks are touched with the rich, roseate orange of the Alpine glow. But the variations of temperature and atmospheric conditions are not sufficiently pronounced to present themselves to the sense as the source of its aspects of tenderness, of majesty, of virginal aloofness. Rather such changes seem to be occasioned by palpitations of the Mountain Spirit, remote in sacred meditation, glowing, dimming, defining itself from within.

It may be that the immense vitality of the land, its abundance, the bursting orchards, the rich variety of native growth, somehow dwarf the earliest impression of the Sierra Madre, since few, if any, gather at first an adequate idea of the real mass and height it represents. It is only after appreciation of the really amazing activities of the Angeleños is a little dulled by familiarity, at early morning

when the groves are sleeping and the bright plantations of the gardens lack the sun to flash their brilliance on the sight, or at evening when a sea mist covers the teeming land, that one is prepared to hear that many of these peaks are higher than the Simplon, and that it would be possible to wander for weeks in the intricacies of its cañons without having time to grow familiar with a single one of them.

Sometimes the mere mechanics of the land, the pull of the wind up the narrow gorges as you pass the mouths of them, advise the open mind of power and immensity residing in the thinly forested bulks. Passing what appears a mere shadowy gulf in the mountain wall, you are aware of a murmurous sound as of the sea in a shell, and feel suddenly the push of the draught on your wind-shield like a great steady hand. In places above San Bernardino the steady pouring of invisible wind rivers has swept the soil for miles and defied three generations of artificial plantations. And sometimes the mountain speaks directly to the soul. I recall such an occasion

one late spring. We had been skirting the range, toward Riverside, all afternoon having the fall of the land seaward always in view, noting how, in spite of the absurd predilection of men for square fields and gridiron arrangements, the main lines of cultivation were being pulled into beauty by the sheer necessity of humoring the harvest. It was that lagging hour between the noon splendor and the gathering of the light for its dramatic passage into night. The orange orchards lay dead green in the hollows, unplanted ridges showed scarcely a trace of atmospheric blueness; unlaced, unbuskined, the land rested. And all in the falling of a leaf, in the scuttle of a horned toad in the dust of the roadway, it lifted into eerie life. It bared its teeth; the veil of the mountain was rent. Nothing changed, nothing stirred or glimmered; but the land had spoken. As if it had taken a step forward, as if a hand were raised, the mountain stood over us. And then it sank again. While the chill was still on us, the grip of terror, there lay the easy land, the comfortable crops, the red geraniums about the bunga-

lows. But never again for me would the Sierra Madre be a mere geographical item, a feature of the landscape; it was Power, immanent and inescapable. Shall not the mother of the land do what it will with its own?

Entering the cañons of the San Gabriel, one is struck with the endearing quality of their charm. In a country which disdains every sort of prettiness and dares even to use monotony as an element of beauty, as California does, it is surprising to find, cut in the solid granite wall, little dells all laced with fern and saxifrage and wind-swung, frail, flowery bells. Little streams come dashing down the runways with an elfin movement, with here and there a miniature fall, 'singing like a bird' as Muir described it, between moss-encrusted banks.

Into the open mouths of such cañons have retreated the hosts of wild flowers that once in the wet seasons overran all that country from San Bernardino to the sea, the white sage, most honeyful of all the sages, the poppies, gilias, cream cups, nemophilas which twenty-five years ago were as common

as meadow grass, as thick as the planted fields of alfalfa which have usurped them. Settlers who came into this country, when the trail over the San Gorgiono had not yet hardened between iron rails, tell of riding belly-deep for miles in wild oats and waving bloom. Where the trail goes out over the San Fernando, toward Camulas, the yellow mustard reached its scriptural height, and the birds of the air built their nests in it. Now and then, in very wet years, a faint yellow tinge, high up under the bases of the hills, is all that is left of the seed which, by report, the Padres sowed along the coastwise trails to mark where they trod the circuit of the Missions.

Everywhere within the cañons, honeyful flowers abound, and up from the rocky floors the floors are stiff with chaparral. This characteristic growth which, seen from the open valley flooded by dry sun, appears as a mere scurf, a roughened lichen on the mountain wall, is in reality a riot of manzanita, mahogany, ceanothus, cherry, and black sage, from ten to fifteen feet high, all but im-

passable. Elsewhere, in the ranges to the north, the chaparral is loose enough to admit fern and herbaceous plants carpeting the earth, but here the rigid, spiny stems contend for three or four feet, thick as a planted hedge before they attain light and air enough to put forth leaf or twig. On the seaward side of the mountains miles and miles of this dense growth flow over the ranges, parted here and there by a knife-edge ridge, or by huge bosses of country rock, affording a great sweep to the eye, over the valley, reaching far to seaward. From here the lower country shrinks to its proper proportion, a toy landscape planted with Noah's Ark trees, and the noise of men is overlaid by the great swells of the Pacific which come thundering in, lifting far and faint reverberations along the ranges.

On either side of these vast conning-towers it is still possible to trace the indefinite tracks which wild creatures make, running clear and well defined for short distances and then melting unaccountably into the scrub again. Occasionally still they discover traces of the wild life in which the Sierra Madre once abounded.

Deer are known to take advantage of such natural outlooks in protecting themselves from their natural enemies; and from the evidence of frequent visits here, bears and foxes and bobcats must have made much the same use of them. From such high escarpments the Indians would have seen Cabrillo's winged boats go by, and from them, all up the coast, ascended the pillars of smoke that attended the galleon of Francis Drake.

Once within the portals of the range, the granite walls sheer away from the sequestered parks of oak, madroña, and Douglas spruce. The trees are not thickly set here, as in the north, but admit of sunny space and murmurous bee pasture between their gracefully contrasting boles, and a thousand bright-feathered and scaled things unknown to the all-pine or all-redwood forests. Such parks or basins vary from a few yards to an acre or two in extent, threaded like beads upon a single stream. One thinks, indeed, of the old-fashioned 'charm string' in which each open space has its peculiar virtue; open sunny shallows, arrowy cascades, troops of lilies stand-

ing high as man's head, forested fern, columbine, delphinium, and scarlet mimulus along the water borders. They grow slighter as the trail ascends. It is possible now to make nearly the whole distance in gravity cars for that purpose provided, but I recommend a sure-footed mule for the true mountain-lover. Clear above the source of the streams, from dips and saddles of the range, above the summer-shrunken glaciers, where the trees are bowed and the chaparral creeps low, as if awed and dizzy, it is possible to have a glimpse of the still unconquered and unconquerable 'sagebrush country.'

All along the back of the Sierra Madre wall, the desert laps like a slow tide, rolling up and receding with the drouths and rains. The eye takes it in no less slowly than the imagination. The view stretches quite to the Colorado, but a haze of heat obscures it, long whitened lines of alkali, like wave marks, edge its encroachments. Here and there lies the dark checkering of fertile patches, spilled over from the rich, west-lying valleys; trending east by south lies the Sierra Madre like an arm, guarding the favored region.

And yet in her very favor she is impartial, for equally as she saves the south from desertness, she has denied to men the one instrument by which the desert could be mastered. Mighty as man is in transforming the face of the earth, he is nothing without the Rains.

THE COASTS OF ADVENTURE

THE COASTS OF ADVENTURE

Old trails, older than the memory of man, go out from the southern country by way of Cahuenga, by Eagle Rock, toward that part of the shelving coast where the Padres' mustard gold lingered longest, as if to mark the locality where the gold they missed was first uncovered. But suppose, on that day of the year '41, Francisco Lopez, major-domo of the Mission San Fernando, had not had an appetite for onions? Who knows how history would have made itself?

The speculation is idle; anybody named Lopez has always a taste for onions because they are the nearest thing to garlic. Don Francisco — I suppose one may grant him the title at this distance — rested under an oak and dug up the wild root with his knife, and the tide of the world's emigration set toward the Coasts of Adventure. I have, holding my papers as I write, an Indian basket reputed to be one of those in which, in those

days, placer gold was washed out of the sandy loam; it was given me by one who had it from Don Antonio Coronel, and has a pattern about it of the low serried hills of the coast district. Where it breaks, as all patterns of Indian baskets do, to give egress to the spirit resident in things dedicated to human use, there are two figures of men with arms outstretched, but divided as the pioneers who carried the cross into that country were from those who followed the lure of gold. The basket wears with time, but the pattern holds, inwoven with its texture as Romance is woven with the history of all that region lying between San Francisco on the north and Cahuenga, where, after a bloodless battle, was consummated the cession of California from Mexico.

From the white landmark of San Juan Capistrano to a point opposite Santa Inez, saints thick as sea birds, standing seaward, break the long Pacific swell: San Clemente, Santa Catalina, Santa Rosa — their deep-scored cliffs searched by the light, revealing their kinship with the parallel mainland

ranges. But there are hints here, in the plant and animal life and in the climate, milder even than that of the opposing channel ports, hints which not even the Driest-Dustiness dare despise, of mellower times than ours from which all fables of Blessed Islands are sprung. Islands 'very near the terrestrial paradise,' the old Spanish romancer described them. Often as not the imagination sees more truly than the eye. I myself am ready to affirm that something of man's early Eden drifted thither on the Kuro-Siwa, that warm current deflected toward our coast, which, for all we know of it, might well be one of the four great rivers that went about the Garden and watered it. Great golden sunfish doze upon the tides, flying fish go by in purple and silver streaks, and under the flat bays, which take, at times, color that rivals the lagoons of Venice, forests of kelp, acrawl with rainbow-colored life, sleep and sway upon tides unfelt of men. There are days at Catalina so steeped with harmonies of sea and sun that the singing of the birds excites the soothed sense no more than if the lucent air had that moment

dripped in sound. These are the days when the accounts that Cabrillo left, of his finding there of a civil and religious development superior to the tribes of the mainland, beguiles the imagination.

One thinks of the watery highway between the west coast and the channel islands as another *Camino Real* of the sea, where in place of mule trains and pacing padres, went balsas, skin canoes, galleons, far-blown Chinese junks, Russian traders slipping under the cliffs of San Juan for untaxed hides and tallow, Atlantic whalers, packets rounding the Horn sunk past the load line with Argonauts of '49, opium smugglers dropping a contraband cask or an equally prohibited coolie under the very wing of San Clemente. So many things could have happened — Odysseys, Æneids — that it is with a sigh one resigns the peaks of the submerged range, paling and purpling on the west, to the student of sea birds and sea-nourished plants.

Looking from the islands landward, the locked shores have still for long stretches the aspect of undiscovered country. Hills break

abruptly in the surf or run into narrow moon-shaped belts of sand where a mountain arm curves out or the sea eats inward. And yet for nearly four centuries the secret of the land was blazoned to all the ships that passed in the great fields of poppy gold that every wet season flamed fifty miles or more to seaward.

One must have seen the Eschscholtzia so, smouldering under the mists of spring, to understand the thrill that comes of finding them later, scattered as they are throughout the gardens of the world. I recall how at Rome, coming up suddenly out of the catacombs — we had gone down by another entrance and had been wandering for hours in the mortuary gloom — memory leaped up to find a great bed of golden poppies tended by brown, bearded Franciscans. They couldn't say — Fray Filippo, whom I questioned, had no notion — whence the sun-bright cups had come, except that they were common in the gardens of his order. It seemed a natural sort of thing for any Mission padre, seeking a memento of his westward faring, to send back to his Brothers of Saint Francis half a world

away, to have sent seeds of these shining offspring of the sun. There was confirmation in the fact that Fray Filippo knew these yellow cups, not by the unspellable botanical name, but by the endearing Castilian *dormidera*, sleepy-eyed, in reference to their habit of unfolding only to the sun; but the connecting thread was lost. Channel fishermen still, in spite of the obliterating crops, trace far to seaward the blue lines of lupines with faint streaks of poppy fires, and above the reek of their boats, when the land wind begins, blown scents of islay and ceanothus.

No rivers of water of notable size pour down this west coast, but rivers of green flood the shallow cañons. Here and there, from the crest of the range, one catches an arrowy glimpse of a seasonal stream, but from the sea view the furred chaparral is unbroken except for bare ridges windswept even of the round-headed oaks. This coast country is a favorite browsing place for deer. They can be seen there still in early summer, feeding on the acorns of the scrub oaks, and especially on the tender twigs of wind-fallen trees, or

herding at noon in the deep fern which closes like cleft waters over their heads. Until within a few years, it was no unlikely thing to hear little black bears snorting and snuffing under the manzanita, of the berries of which they are inordinately fond. This lovely shrub, with its twisty, satiny stems of wine red, suffusing brown, its pale conventionalized leaves and flat little umbels of berries, suggests somehow the carving on old cathedral choirs. As though it borrowed its characteristic touch from an external shaping hand; as if with its predetermined habit of growth it had a secret affinity for man and waited but to be transplanted into gardens! It needs, however, no garden facilities, but shapes itself to the most inhospitable conditions. About the time it begins to put forth its thousand waxy bells, in December or January, the toyon, the native holly, is at its handsomest. This is a late summer flowering shrub, that in midwinter loses a little of its glossy green, and above its yellowing foliage bears berries in great scarlet clusters. Between these two overlapping ends, the gamut of the chaparral is run in blues of

wild lilac, reds and purples of rhus and buckthorn, and the wide white umbels of the alder which here becomes a tree, fifty to sixty feet in height. It is the only one of the tall chaparras which has edible fruit, for, though bears and Indians make a meal of manzanita, it does not commend itself to cultivated taste. More humble species, huckleberry, thimble, and blackberry, crowd the open spaces under the oak-madroña forests, or, as if they knew their particular usefulness to man, come hurrying to clearings of the axe, and may be seen holding hands as they climb to cover the track of careless fires. In June whole hill slopes, under the pine and madroñas, crimson with sweet wild strawberries. The wild currant and the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry are not edible, but they are under no such obligation; they 'make good' with long wands of jewel-red drooping blossoms, and in the case of the currant, with delicate pink racemes thrown out almost before the leaves while the earth still smells of winter dampness. Though nobody seems to know how it traveled so far, this 'incense shrub' is a favorite of English

gardens where, before the primroses begin, it serves the same purpose as in the west coast cañons, quickening the senses into anticipations of beauty on every side.

Inland the close, round-backed hills draw into ranks and ranges, making way for chains of fertile valleys which also fill out the Californian's calendar of saints. But in fact, your true Californian prays to his land as much as ever the early Roman did, and pours on it libations of water, and continuous incense of praise. Every one of these longish, north-trending basins is superlatively good for something, olives or wheat, perhaps; Pájaro produces apples and Santa Clara has become the patroness of prunes.

Nothing could be more ethereally lovely than the spring aspect of the orchard country. It begins with the yellowing of the meadowlark's breast, and then of early mornings, the appearance, as if flecks of the sky had fallen, of great flocks of bluebirds that blow about in the ploughed lands and are dissolved in rain. Then the poppies spring up, like torchmen in the winter wheat, and along

the tips of the apricots, petals begin to show, crumpled like the pink lips of children shut upon mischievous secrets. A day or two of this and then the blossoms swarm like bees; white fire breaks out among the prunes, it scatters along the foothills like the surf. Toward the end of the blooming season, all the country roads are defined by thin lines of petal drift and any wind that blows is alive with whiteness. After which, thick leafage covers the ripening fruit and the valley dozes through the summer heat with the farms outlined in firm green like patchwork drawn up across the mountains' knees.

The tree that gives the memorable touch to the landscape of the coast valleys is the oak, both the *roble* and *encina* varieties. There are others with greater claims to distinction, the madroña, red-breeched, green-coated, a very Robin Hood of trees, sequestered in cool cañons, and the redwood, the *palo colorado*, lurking in the Santa Cruz Mountains, discovered by the first Governor, Don Gaspar de Portola, on his search for the lost port of Monte-Rey. All these keep well

back from the main lines of travel. The most that the rail tourist sees of them is a line of redwoods, perhaps, climbing up from the sea-fronting cañons to peer and whisper on the ridges above the fruiting orchards. But the oaks go on, keeping well in the laps of the hills, avoiding the wind rivers, marching steadily across the alluvial basins on into the hot interior. They are more susceptible to wind influence than almost any other, and mark the prevailing direction of the seasonal air currents with their three-hundred-year-old trunks as readily as reeds under a freshet. You can see them hugging the lee side of any cañon, leaning as far as they may out of the sea-born draughts, but standing apart, true aristocrats among trees, disdaining alike one another and the whole race of orchard inmates. When in full leaf — for the *roble* is deciduous — they are both of them distinctly paintable, particularly when in summer the trunks, gray and aslant, upbearing cloud-shaped masses of dark green, make an agreeable note against the fawn-colored hills. The roble is a noble tree, high-crowned, with

a great sweep of branches, but seen in winter, stripped of its thick, small leafage, it loses interest. Its method of branching is fussy, too finely divided and without grace.

Around Santa Margarita and Paso Robles filmy moss spreads a veil over the oaks as of Druid meditation; one fancies them as aloof from the stir of present-day life as they were from the bears that used to feed on the mast under them. A hundred years or so ago, the Franciscans drove out the bears by an incantation — I mean by the exorcism of the Church enforced with holy water and a procession with banners around the Mission precinct — 'I adjure you, O Bears, by the true God, by the Holy God . . . to leave the field to our flocks, not to molest them nor come near them.' But bears, or *homo sapiens*, it is all one to the oaks of San Antonio; indeed, if legend is to be credited, the four-footed brothers would have been equally as acceptable to the patron of the Mission where this interesting ceremony took place. I can testify, however, that after all this lapse of time the exorcism is still in force, for though I have

been up and down that country many times I have seen no bears in it.

Things more pestiferous than bears are driven out — humors of the blood, stiffness of the joints — by the medicinal waters that bubble and seep along certain ancient fissures of the country rock. This has always seemed to me the very insolence of superfluity. Who wishes, when all the air is scented with the fragrance of wild vines, to have his nose assaulted with fumes of sulphur, even though it is known to be good for a number of things? But there are some people who could never be made to observe the noble proportions of a five-hundred-year-old oak with the wild grapes going from tree to tree like a tent, except as a by-process incident to the drinking of nasty waters. So the land has its way even with our weaknesses.

Besides these excursions inland, which bring us in almost every case to one of the ancient Franciscan foundations, there are two or three ports of call on the sea front worth lingering at for more things than the pleasant air and the radiant wild bloom. One

of these is Santa Barbara which Santa Inez holds in its lap, curving like a scimitar opposite the most northerly of the channel islands. Understand, however, that no good comes of thinking of Santa Barbara as a place on the map. It is a Sargossa of Romance, a haven of last things, the last Mission in the hands of the Franciscans, the last splendor of the Occupation, the last place where mantillas were worn and they danced the *fandango* and *la-jota;* an eddy into which has drifted remnants of every delightful thing that has passed on the highways of land and sea, which here hail one another across the curving moon-white beach. Summer has settled there — California summer which never swelters, never scorches. Frost descends at times from Santa Inez to the roofs, but lays no finger on the fuchsias, the poinsettias, and the heliotropes climbing to second-story windows. The wild thickets which contests the territory with the town are vocal with night-singing mocking-birds. Along the foreshore, white pelicans divide the mountain-shadowed waters. The waters, taking all the sky's changes, race to

the fairy islands, the chaparral runs back to the flanks of Santa Inez, showing yellowly through the distant blue of pines; overhead a sky clouded with light. This is not a paradox, but an attempt to express the misty luminosity of a heaven filled with refractions of the summer-tinted slope, the glaucous leafage of the chaparral, the white beach and sapphire-glinting water. The sky *beyond* the enclosing mountains has the cambric blueness of the superheated interior, but directly overhead it has depth and immensity of color unequaled except along the Mediterranean.

Santa Barbara is a port of distinguished visitors. More and more varieties of sea birds put in there on the long flight from the Arctic to the Equator than is easily believable. In the Estero — *esteril*, sterile — an ill-smelling tide pool lying behind the town — may be found at one season or another all the Western species that delight the ornithologist. The black brant, going by night, and wild swans, as many as a score of them together, have been noted in its back waters, and scarcely any stroll along the receding surf but is en-

livened by the resonant, sweet whistle of the plover. In hollows of the sands, thousands of beach-haunting birds may be seen camping for the night, looking like strange, seacolored vegetation. Early mornings when the channel racing by, leaves the bay placid, tens of thousands of shearwaters sleep swimming in shouldering ranks that sway with the incoming swell as the kelp sways, without being scattered by it. One can see the same sight, augmented as to numbers, around Monterey, a long day's journey as the car goes, to the north, long enough and lovely enough to deserve its own chapter.

THE PORT OF MONTEREY

THE PORT OF MONTEREY

WITHOUT doubt history is made quite as much by the mistakes of men as by their uttermost certainties. The persistent belief of the ancient geographers in the existence of the Straits of Anian, the traditional North-West passage, led to some romancing, and to the exploration of the California coast a century or so before it was of any particular use to anybody. It led also to the bluest bay. Viscaino took possession of it for Philip of Spain as early as 1602, nearly two hundred years before the Franciscans planted a cross there under Viscaino's very tree. During all that time the same oaks staggered up the slope away from the wind and the scimitar curve of the beach kept back the brilliant waters. There is a figure of immensity in this more terrifying than the mere lapse of years. Not how many times, but with what sureness for every day the sapphire deep shudders into chrysoprase along the white line of the

breakers. We struggle so to achieve a little brief moment of beauty, but every hour at Monterey it is given away.

The bay lies squarely fronting the Pacific swell, about a hundred miles south of the Golden Gate between the horns of two of the little tumbled coast ranges, cutting back to receive the waters of the Pájaro and the Salinas. From the south the hill juts out sharply, taking the town and the harbor between its knees, but the north shore is blunted by the mountains of Santa Cruz. The beach is narrow, and all along its inner curve blown up into dunes, contested every season by the wind and by the quick, bright growth of sand verbena, lupines, and mesembryanthemum. The waters of the rivers are set back by the tides, they are choked with bars, and sluiced out by winter floods. For miles back into the valleys of Pájaro and Salinas, blue and yellow lupines continue the color of the sand and the pools of tidewater. They climb up the landward slope of the high dunes and set the shore a little seaward against the diminished surf. Then the equinoctial

tide rises against the land that the lupines have taken and smooths out their lovely gardens with a swift white hand. The beach is leveled again for the building of pale wind-pointed cones.

The valley of the Salinas, which has its only natural outlet on the bay, is of the type of coast valleys, long, narrow and shallow, given over to farming and to memories of the mission of Our Lady of Solitude lying now as a heap of ruins in a barley field. It is a place set apart where any morning you might wake to find the sea has entered between the little brooding hills to rest. Gulls follow the plough there, and pines avoid the river basin as though they knew very well their respective rights in it. One has, however, to make a point of such discoveries, for the entrance to the valley is obscured by its very candor lying all open as it does to drifting dune and variable sea marshes.

Even more worth while it is to follow the flat-bordered Pájaro into the shut valley where dozes the little town of San Juan Bautista, taking, on its well-sunned mesa,

those placid lapses of self-forgetfulness which are to the aged as a foretaste of the long sleep. Here it was that the magic muse of Music came into the country. It came in a tin-piped, wooden hand organ, built by one Benjamin Dobson, of 22 Swan Street, London, in the year 1735, but of all its history until it was unpacked from muleback by Padre Lausan in 1797 there is not a word current. Our acquaintance with it begins on the day that the Padre set it up in the hills and played 'The Sirens' Waltz,' 'Lady Campbell's Reel,' all its repertoire of favorite London airs, of which the least appropriate to its present mission must have been the one called 'Go to the Devil.' Which only goes to prove that the spirit of the Franciscans was often superior to their means, for what the simple savages did do, as soon as they had overcome their superstitious fear of the noise box, was to hasten to Mass to hear it as often as possible. There remain three old volumes of music written later for the Mission, which came true to its founding and excelled in all sweet sounds, but none, it is said, pleased the In-

dians so much or so raised their spirits as 'The Sirens' Waltz.' No doubt its inspiriting strains added something to the warlike spirit which led here to the only local resistance opposed to the American invasion, for it was on the Gavilan heights above the little town that Frémont, on the tallest tree that he could find, raised the Stars and Stripes, gallantly if somewhat prematurely. It was from San Juan that Castro's men marched to the final capitulation of Cahuenga, and finally from here the last remnant of the old life drains away. One hears the echo of it faintly as the sea sounds that on rare days come trembling up the valley on the translucent air.

Returning to the bay, one finds all interest centering about the Point of Pines, a very ancient rocky termination of the most westerly of the coast barriers. The Point, which is really a peninsula, is one of the most notable landmarks between Point Concepción on the south and Fort Point at San Francisco. Its lighthouse stands well out on a rocky finger, ringed with incessant clanging buoys; between it and the Santa Cruz light is a road-

stead for an empire. A windy bay at best, deep tides and squally surfaces, the waters of Monterey have other values than the colorist finds in them. Sardines, salmon, cod, tuna, yellowtail run with its tides. At most seasons of the year whales may be seen spouting there or are cast upon its shoals. At one time the port enjoyed a certain prosperity as a whaling station, of which small trace remains besides the bleaching vertebræ that border certain of the old gardens, and the persistent whalebone souvenirs of the curio dealer. Lateen-rigged fisher fleets flock in and out of the harbor, butterfly-winged; and all about the rocky beaches creep the square-toed boats of the Japanese and Chinese abalone gatherers. Thousands of purple sea-urchins, squid, hundred-fingered starfish, and all manner of slimy sea delicacies do these slant-eyed Orientals draw up out of the rainbow rock pools and the deeps below the receding surf. They go creeping and peering about the ebb, their guttural hunting cries, borne inshore on the quiet air, seeming as much a native sea speech as the gabble of the gulls. So in their skin canoes

and balsas the Indians must have crept about the inlets for as long as is required to lay a yard or two of mould over the ancient middens of the tribe, as long as the sea takes to build a barrier of silver dunes half a mile seaward. Even at that distance the plough turns up the soil evenly sprinkled with crumbling shell which holds to the last shred a gleam of its old iridescence. Far inland, past the Sierra Wall, as far as the country of Lost Borders and beyond it, I have found amulets of this loveliest of the pearl shells, traded for and treasured by a people to whom the 'Big Water' is a half-credited traveler's tale.

About five hundred yards outside the surf, from Laboratory Point, circling the peninsula to Mission Point on the south, the submerged rocky ridge has grown a great tawny mane of kelp. Every year it is combed and cut by the equinoctial tides, and cast ashore in brown sea-smelling windrows, and every year it grows again to be the feeding ground of a million water-haunting birds. Here the ancient murrelet fattens for the long flight to the Alaskan breeding grounds, and in the wildest gales

the little nocturnal auklets may be heard calling to one another above the warring thunder of the surf, or, when the nights are clear and the mists all banded low beneath the moon, they startle the beach wanderer with their high, keen notes and beetle whirring wings. Long triangular flights of curlew drop down these beaches against the westering sun, with wings extended straight above their heads, furling like the little lateen sails come home from fishing. Sandpipers, sanderlings, all the ripple runners, the skimmers of the receding foam, all the scavengers of the tide, the gulls, Glaucous-winged, Herring, Ringbilled, and the species that take their name of the locality, may be found two or three miles inland, following the plough as robins do in the spring. When the herring school in the bay nothing could exceed the multitude and clamor of the Herring gulls. They stretch out in close order, wing beating against wing, actually over square miles of the ruffling water between Punta de Pinos and the anchorage. But any attempt to render an account of the wild winged life that flashes about the bays of Car-

mel and Monterey would read like an ornithologist's record.

After storms that divide the waters outside the bay into great toppling mountains, in the quiet strip between the kelp and the beaches, thousands of shearwaters may be seen sleeping in long, swaying, feathered pontoons shoulder to shoulder. The island rocks standing within the surf, from the Point of Pines all down the coast to Point Sur, are famous rookeries of cormorant. Watchful and black against the guano-whitened rocks, they guard their ancestral nests, redecorated each season with gay weed, pulled from the painted gardens of the deep; turning their long necks this way and that like revolving turret-tops, they beat off the gluttonous gulls with a devotion which would seem to demand some better excuse than their naked, greasy, wide-mouthed young. Warm mornings these can be seen stretching gaping bills from the nesting hollows, waving this way and that like the tips of voracious, black-stemmed sea anemones. Other rocks, white with salty rime, are given by mutual consent to rookeries

of the yelping seals, the 'sea lions' of this coast. Moonlight nights they can be observed playing there, with the weird half-human suggestion of mythical sea creatures.

Other and less fortunate adventurers on the waters of Monterey have left strange traces on that coast; one stumbles on a signboard set up among the rocks to mark where such and such a vessel went to pieces in a night of storm. Buried deep in the beach beyond the anchorage is the ancient teakwood hull of the Natala, the ship that carried Napoleon to Elba. It brought secularization to the Missions also, after which unfriendly service the wind woke in the night and broke it against the shore. Just off Point Lobos, the Japanese divers after abalones report a strange, uncharted sunken craft, a Chinese junk blown out of her course, perhaps, or one of those unreported galleons that followed a phantom trail of gold all up the west coast of the New World. Strange mosses come ashore here, tide by tide, all lacy and scarf-colored, and once we found on the tiny strand below Pescadero, a log of sandalwood with faint

water-worn traces of tool marks still upon it.

Most mysterious of all the hints held by the farthest west — for, when you have come to land again, sailing from this port, it is east! — of a time before our time, is the Monterey cypress.

Across the neck of the peninsula, a matter of six or eight miles, cuts in the little bay of Carmel, a blue jewel set in silver sand. Two points divide it from the racing Pacific, the southern limb of Punta de Pinos, and the deeply divided rocky ledge of Lobos — *lobos*, the wolf, with thin raking granite jaws. Now on these two points, and nowhere else in the world, are found natural plantations of the trees that might have grown in Dante's Purgatorio, or in the imagined forests where walked the rapt, tormented soul of Blake. Blake, indeed, might have had hint of them from some transplanted seedling on an English terrace, for the Monterey Cypress is one of the most widely diffused of trees and quick-growing for the first century or so. But only here on the Point and south to Pescadero

ranch do the cypresses grow of God's planting. With writhen trunks and stiff, contorted limbs they take the storm and flying scud as poppies take the sun — the Spirit of the Ancient Rocks come to life in a tree. Incredibly old, even to the eye, they have no soil, and seek none other than the thousand-year litter of their scaly needles, the husk of their nut-shaped, woody cones. Grown under friendly conditions the young trees spire as do other conifers, but after three or four centuries they take on strange, enchanted shapes. Their flat, wind-depressed tops are as resilient as springs. One may lie full length along them, scarcely sunk in the minutely feathered twigs, and watch the coasting steamers trail by on seas polished by the heat, or the winter surf bursting high in air. Or one could steal through their thick plantations unsuspected, from twisty trunk to trunk in the black shade, feeling the old earth mood and man's primeval fear, the pricks and warnings of a world half made. The oldest of the cypresses are attacked by a red, fungous rust, the color of corroding time. It creeps along the under

side of boughs and eats away the green, but even then the twisted heartwood will outlast most human things.

The pines of Monterey, though characteristic enough of the locality to take on its identifying name, are thoroughly plebeian; prolific, quick-growing, branching like candelabra when young, but, in a hundred years or so, their wide limbs studded with persistent cones take on something of the picturesque eccentricity that may be noticed among the old in rural neighborhoods. They grow freely back into the hills till they are warned away from the cañons by the more sequestered *palo colorado*. The Monterey Pine is one of the long-needled varieties, but of a too open growth, perhaps, or too flexile to have any voice but a faint rustling echo of the ocean. The hill above Monterey crowned with them is impressive enough — they look lofty and aloof and dark against the sky; but growing in a wood they are seen to be too spindling and sparse-limbed to be interesting. The oaks do better by the landscape, all of the *encina* variety, bearing stiff clouds of evergreen fo-

liage in lines simple enough to compose beautifully with the slow scimitar sweep of the bay and the round cloud masses that gather from the sea and hang faintly pearled above the horizon. There are no redwoods on the peninsula; straggling lines of them look down from Palo Corona on Carmel Bay, walking one after another, with their odd tent-shaped tops and long branches all on the windward side, like a procession of friars walking against the wind. On the Santa Cruz coast, and in small groups near Carmel, grows the tanbark oak, not a true oak but of the genus *Pasania*, whose nearest surviving congeners are no nearer than Siam. How it came here, survivor of an earlier world or drifting on the changing Japanese current, no one knows. Apparently no one cares, for the only use the Santa Crucians have put it to is to tan shoe leather.

Three little towns have taken root on the peninsula; two on the bay side, the old pueblo of Monterey with its whitewashed adobes still contriving to give character to the one wide street; Pacific Grove, utterly modern,

on the surf side of Punta de Pinos, a town which began, I believe, as a resort for the churchly minded. A very clean and well-kept and proper town, absolutely exempt, as the deeds are drawn to assure us, 'from anything having a tendency to lower the moral atmosphere,' a town where the lovely natural woods have given place to houses every fifty feet or so, all nicely soldered together with lines of bright scarlets and clashing magentas and rosy pinks of geraniums and pelargoniums in a kind of predetermined cheerfulness. In short, a town where nobody would think of living who wanted anything interesting to happen to them. Above it on the hill the Presidio commands the naked slope fronting toward Santa Cruz and raking the open roadstead with its guns. It was under this hill on the harbor side, where a little creek still runs a rill in the rainy season, that Viscaino heard the first Mass in California, and nearly two hundred years later, Padre Serra set up the cross.

On June 30, 1770, that being the Holy Day of Pentecost, was founded here the Mission of

San Carlo Borromeo, afterward transplanted for sufficient reasons over the hill six miles away on Carmel River. The town is full of reminders of the days of the Spanish Occupation when it was the capital of Alta California. Old gardens here have still the high adobe walls, old houses the long galleries and little wrought-iron balconies; at times yet the tide rises in the streets of the town, and still the speech is soft.

It is also possible to buy *tamales* there and *enchiladas* and *chile con carne* which will for the moment restore your faith in certain conceptions of a hereafter that of late have lost popularity.

Half a mile back from the beach, and divided from the town by the old cemetery, in a deep alluvial flat grown to great oaks and creeping sycamores, is situated one of the famous winter resorts of the world, Hotel Del Monte. I can recommend it with great freedom to those curiously constituted people who have to have an excuse for being out of doors. The Del Monte drives and golf links are said by those who have used them to pro-

vide such excuse in its most compelling form. Those who suffer under no such necessity will do well to take the white road climbing the hill out of old Monterey and drop down the other side of it into Carmel.

From the top of this hill the lovely curve of the bay, disappearing far to the north under a violet mist, is pure Greek in its power to affect the imagination. Its blueness is the color that lies upon the Gulf of Dreams. The ivory rim of the dunes, the shadowed blue of the terraces, set on a sudden all the tides of recollection back on Salonica, Lepanto, the hill of Athens. You are reconciled for a moment to the chance of history which whelmed the colorful days of the Spanish Occupation. They could never have lived up to it.

But once on the Carmel side of the peninsula, regret comes back very poignantly. The bay is a miniature of the other, intensified, the connoisseur's collection; blue like the eye of a peacock's feather, fewer dunes, but whiter, a more delicate tracery on them of the beach verbena, hills of softer contours, tawny, rippled like the coat of a great cat

sleeping in the sun. Carmel Valley breaks upon the bay by way of the river which chokes and bars, runs dry in summer, or carries the yellow of its sands miles out in winter, a winding track across the purple inlet. It is a little valley and devious, reaching far inland. Above its source the peaks of Santa Lucia stand up, having for their southern bulwark Palo Corona. Willows, sycamores, alders, wild honeysuckle, and great heaps of blackberry vines hedge the path of its waters.

Where the valley widens behind the low barrier that shuts out the sea, sits the Mission of San Carlo Borromeo, once the spiritual capital of Alta California. Here Junipero Serra, and after him the other padre presidentes, held the administration of Mission affairs and from here Serra wandered forth on foot, up and down this whole coast from San Diego to Solano with pacification and the seeds of civilization. Here on the walls, faintly to be traced beneath the scorn of time, he blazoned with his own hands the Burning Heart, the symbol of his own inward flame. Here, in his seventy-first year, he died and was buried

on the gospel side of the altar. It is reported that his last act was to walk to the doorway to look once, a long look, on the hills turning amber under the August sun, on the heaven-blue water and the white hands of the surf beating the cliffs of Lobos, looked on the fields and the orchard planted by his own hand, on the wattled huts of the neophytes redeemed, as he believed them, to all eternity, after which he lay down and slept. It is further reported in the annals of the Mission that it was necessary to place a guard about the wasted body in its shabby brown gown, to defend it from the crowding mourners, craving relics of the blessed remains. Had I lived at that time I should have been among them, for he was a great soul, and have I not felt even at this distance of the years the touch of his high fervors! San Carlos is one of the best-conditioned of these abandoned fortresses of the Faith; the ancient pear trees are still in bearing; the wild mustard yellows in the fields; its architecture still betrays the uncertain hand of the savage; back in unsearchable recesses of the hills linger still some Indians

whose garbled greeting is a memory of the '*Ama Dios*' which the padres taught them. Until a few years ago the prayer post, a rude slab with the triple-knotted cord of the Franciscans carved around it, still stood on the hill at the end of the path their devout feet made in resorting to it for courage and consolation. These mementoes fade, but year by year the impress of the great spirit of Serra grows plainer like one of those trodden paths of long ago, which show not at all if you seek them in the grass or near at hand, but from the vantage of Palo Corona are traceable far across the landscape.

The modern Carmel is a place of resort for painter and poet folk; beauty is cheap there; it may be had in superlative quality for the mere labor of looking out of the window. It is the absolute setting for Romance. No shipping ever puts in at the singing beaches. Six-mule freighting teams from the Sur with their bells ajangle go by on the county road. Great dreams have visited the inhabitants thereof. Spring visits it also with yellow violets all up the wooded hills, and great foun-

tain sprays of sea-blue ceanothus. Summer reddens the berries of the manzanita and mellows the poppy-blazoned slopes to tawny saffron. Strong tides arrive unheralded from some far-off deep-sea disturbance and shake the beaches. Suddenly, on the quietest days, some flying squadron of the deep breaks high over Lobos and neighs in her narrow caverns. Blown foam, whipped all across the Pacific, is cast up like weed along the sand and skims the wave marks with a winged motion. After the equinoctial winds, whole flocks of these foam birds may be seen scudding toward the rock corners of Mission Point. Other tides, the sea slips far out on new-made, level reaches and leaves the wet sand shining after the sun goes down, like the rosy inside pearl of the abalones.

The forests of Punta de Pinos are sanctuary. It is still possible to hear there, at long intervals, the demoniac howl of the little gray dog of the wilderness, 'Brother Coyote,' the butt, the cat's-paw, the Jack Dullard of Indian folklore, and sometimes in the open country below Point Lobos to see one curious and

agaze from brown, naked bosses of the hills. Any warm afternoon, by lying very still a long time in the *encinal*, one may observe the country-colored bobcat, tawny as the grass in summer, slipping from shade to shade. Sometimes if startled he will turn and face you with his blinking, yellow, half-hypnotic stare before he returns to his unguessed errand. Any morning you may find about your bungalow innumerable prints, as of baby palms pressed downward in the dust, the tracks of the friendly little raccoon who may be heard bubbling in the shallow cañons any moonlight night. Often I have left a cut melon under my window for the sake of seeing, an hour after moonrise, two or three of them scooping out the pink heart, spatting one another for helpings out of turn, keeping, in spite of the little gluttons you know them to be, a great affectation of daintiness. The night cry of these little creatures is difficult to distinguish from the love call of the horned owl, who, on the undark nights of summer, skims the low foreshore for the sake of the field mice and gophers that feed on the seeds of the beach

grasses. Every sort of migratory bird that passes up and down this coast lingers awhile in the neighborhood of Monterey and some species, as the Point Pinos Juncos, take from it their distinctive name. But if, when you walk in the piney woods, the Stellar Jay has first sight of you, you will find them singularly empty, for these blue-jacketed policemen of the pines permit nothing to pass them unannounced. Of all the wood folk, the wise quail alone ignore their strident warnings. The quail have learned not only the certainty of safety but its absolute limit. I have seen whole flocks of them, scared by the gun, whirring out of the public lands to a point not out of gunshot, but within the forbidden ground, from which they send back soft twitterings of defiance. It is not, however, their habit to flush except in great danger, but to run to cover, moving with a peculiar elusive rhythm, like the rippling of a snake. This plump little partridge — for it is only in the common speech that he becomes a quail — is the apt spirit of the chaparral; cheerful, social, strong in the domestic virtues. His crest not floating

backward in warrior fashion, but cocked forward over an eye, he has all the air of the militant bourgeois who could fight, of course, but finds running matches better with his inclination. Just at the end of rains, before mating begins, hundreds of them may be seen feeding in a flock on open hillsides, and the thickets of buckthorn and ceanothus ring with their soft Spanish '*cuidado*,' Have a care!

Three roads go up out of the peninsula to entice the imagination: that one which we have already taken to the hills of Salinas and the little town of San Juan, the road to Carmel Valley, and the adventurous trail which leads all down the well-bitten coast past Sur and Piedras Blancas. The Valley road turns off at the top of the divide between Carmel and Monterey; it passes on the landward side of the Mission into the river bottom and skirts the narrow chain of farms, rising with the rise of the thinly forested hills toward Tasajara, the Place of Springs. Here it is lost in the intricacies of the 'back country.' Deer hunters go that way in the season, and those whose delight it is to lose themselves in the

wilderness, to taste wild fruit and know no roof but the windy tent of stars. Years since there used to come out of that country shy-spoken, bearded men with bear meat to sell and wild honey in the honeycomb, rifled from hiving rocks and hollow trees, but I fancy they are all dead now, or translated into tall, moss-bearded pines.

The coast road, after it leaves Point Lobos behind, goes south and south, between high trackless hills and the lineless Pacific floor. From Point Lobos you can see it rise over bare, sea-breasting hills, and disappear in narrow cañons down which immeasurable redwoods follow the white-footed creeks almost to the surf. Dim, violet-tinted islands rise offshore to break the sea's assault. Now and then one ventures upon that road as far as Arbolado, to return prophesying. But the most of us are wiser, understanding that the best service the road can render us is to remain a dramatic and unlimned possibility.

OLD SPANISH GARDENS

Doña Ina Manuelita Echivarra has come to the time of life when waists are not to be mentioned, and all the evidence of her name is required to convince you that her cheek has once known tints of the olive and apricot. Tio Juan, who suns himself daily in her patio, has achieved the richness of weathered teak; his *mostachios* are whitened as with the rime that collects sometimes on old adobes near the seashore or in the vicinity of alkali flats. But Doña Ina, who has missed by a score of years his mark of the days of *mañana por la mañana*, is muddily dark and her mustache — but one does not suggest such things of a lady, and that Doña Ina is every inch a lady could be proved by a foot so delicately arched and pointed, an ankle so neat, that there is not another like it in your acquaintance save the mate to it. Once you have seen it peeping forth from under the black skirt — have not Castilian ladies worn black immemorially? —

you do not require the assurance of Tio Juan that there was no one in her day could have danced *La Jota* with Doña Ina Manuelita.

She will clack the castanets for you occasionally still, just to show how it was done, or with the guitar resting on the arm of her chair — laps are no more to be thought of than waists are — she will quaver a song, '*La Golindrina*' for choice, or '*La Noche Esta Serena.*' But Doña Ina's time has gone by for shining at anything but conversation. She can always talk, and never so fruitfully as when the subject is her garden.

A Spanish garden is a very intimate affair. It is the innermost undergarment of the family life. Doña Ina's was walled away from the world by eight feet of adobe, around the top of which still lingered, when last I saw her, the coping of curved red tiles of Mission manufacture. Doña Ina's garden was not spoken of as the garden at all; it was the patio, an integral part of the dwelling. There was, in fact, a rawhide cot on the long gallery which gave access to it, and over the railing Doña Ina's drawn-work chemises bleaching in the

sun. The patio is a gift to us from Andalusia; it is more Greek than Oriental and the English porch has about as much relation to it as the buttons on the back of a man's coat to the sword belt they were once supposed to accommodate. The patio is the original mud-walled enclosure of a people who preferred living in the open, but were driven to protection; the rooms about three sides of it arose as an afterthought.

The Echivarra patio did not lack the indispensable features of the early California establishment, the raised grill or cooking platform, and the *ramada* — the long vine-covered trellis where one took wine with one's friends, or the ladies of the family sat sewing at their interminable drawn work, *enramada*. The single vine which covered the twenty-foot trellis was of Mission stock, and had been planted by Doña Ina's father in the year the Path-Finder came over Tejon Pass into the great twin valleys. Its stem was almost as thick as the twisted body of Tio Juan. In Doña Ina's childhood a winepress had stood in the corner of the patio where now there was a row

of artichokes which had been allowed to seed in order that their stiff silken tassels, dyed blue and crimson, might adorn the pair of china vases on either side the altar of the Echivarra private chapel, for Doña Ina was nothing if not religious. In the corner of the patio farthest from the gallery, a fig tree — this also is indispensable — hung over the tiled wall like a cloud. There was a weeping willow in the midst of the garden, and just beyond it, on either side the door, two great pepper trees of the very stock of the parent of all pepper trees in Alta California, which a sea captain from South America gave to the padre at San Luis Rey. Along the east wall there were pomegranates.

A pomegranate is the one thing that makes me understand what a pretty woman is to some men — the kind of prettiness that was Doña Ina's in the days when she danced *La Jota*. The flower of the pomegranate has the crumpled scarlet of lips that find their excuse in simply being scarlet and folded like the petals of a flower; and then the fruit, warm from the sunny wall, faintly odorous, duskily

flushed! It is so tempting when broken open — that sort opens of its own accord if you leave it long enough on the bush — the rich heart color, and the pleasant, uncloying, sweet, subacid taste. One tastes and tastes — but when all is said and done there is nothing to a pomegranate except color and flavor. And at least, if it does not nourish, neither does it give you indigestion. There are so many men who would like to find a pretty woman always in the same category. When we sat together in the patio nibbling the rosy seeds, I could believe, even without the evidence of the ankles, that Doña Ina had had her pomegranate days. Only, of course, she would not have smelled so of musk and — there is no denying it — of garlic. Thick-walled old adobes of the period of the Spanish Occupation give off a faint reek of this compelling condiment at every pore, and as for the musk, it was always blooming about the gallery — which Doña Ina called the *portale* — in saucers and broken flower pots.

And yet Doña Ina was sensitive to odors; she told me that she had had the datura

moved from the place where her mother had planted it, to the far end of the patio, where after nightfall its heavy, slightly fetid perfume, unnoticeable by day, scented all the air. She added that she felt convicted by this aversion, of a want of sentiment toward a plant whose wide, papery white bells went by the name of 'Angels' trumpets.'

On the day that she told me about the datura, which I had only recognized by its resemblance to its offensive wayside congener, the 'jimson weed,' the Señora Echivarra had been washing her hair with pounded *amole* root, and dressing it with a tonic made of oil expressed from the seeds of the megharizza after a recipe which her mother had had from *her* mother, who had it from an Indian who used to peddle vegetables from the Mission, driving in every Saturday in an ancient *carreta*. I was interested to know if it were any more efficacious than the young shoots of the golden poppy fried in olive oil, which I had already tried, as well as the *amole*. So we fell to talking of the virtues of the plants and their application.

We began with the blessed 'herb of the saints' dried bunches of which hung up under the rafters of the *portale* as an unfailing resort in affections of the respiratory tract, and *yerba buena*, in which she was careful to distinguish between the creeping, aromatic *del campo* ('of the fields'), and the *yerba buena del poso* ('herb of the well'), the common mint of damp places. When she added that the buckskin bag on the wall contained shavings of *cascara sagrada*, the sacred bark of the native buckthorn, indispensable to all nurseries, I knew that she had named two of the three most important contributions of the West to the modern pharmacopœia. This particular bag of bark had been sent from Sonoma County, for south of Monterey cascara grows too thin to be worth the gathering. The grindelia, she told me, had come from the salt marshes about the mouth of the Pájaro, where Don Gaspar must have crossed, going northward.

'And were you then at such pains to secure them?'

'In the old days, yes,' she assured me. In

her mother's time there was a regular traffic carried on, by means of roving Indians, in healing herbs and simples; things you could get now by no means whatever.

'As, for instance —?' I was curious.

Well, there was creosote gum which came from the desert beyond the Sierra Wall, valuable for sores and for rheumatism. It took me a moment or two, however, to recognize, in her appellation of it, *hideondo* ('stinking'), the shiny, shellac-covered *larrea* of the arid regions. There were roots also of the holly-leaved barberry which came from wet mountains northward, and of the 'skunk cabbage' which is to be found only in soggy mountain meadows, where any early spring, almost before the frost was out of the ground, bears could be seen rooting it from the sod, fairly burying themselves in the black, peaty loam.

But when it came to *yerba mansa*, Doña Ina averred, her mother would trust nobody for its gathering. She would take an Indian or two and as many of her ten children as could not be trusted to be left at home, and

make long *paseos* into the coast ranges for this succulent cure-all. I knew it well for one of the loveliest of meadow-haunting plants; wherever springs babbled, wherever a mountain stream lost itself under the roble oaks, the *yerba mansa* lifted above its heart-shaped leaves of pale green, quaint, winged cones on pink, pellucid stems. But I had never heard one half of the curative wonders which Doña Ina related of the *yerba mansa*. Efficacious in rheumatism, invaluable in pulmonary complaints, its bruised leaves reduced swellings; the roots were tonic and alterative.

I spare you the whole list, for Doña Ina was directly of the line of that lovely señorita who had disdainfully described the English as the race who 'pay for everything,' and to her mind a whole category of virtues was required to induce so much effort as a trip into the mountains which had not a *baile* or a *fiesta* at the end of it. Other things that were sought for by the housewives of the Spanish Occupation were *amole*, or soaproot, the bulbs of a delicate, orchid-like lily which comes up in the late summer among the stems of the

chaparral, and the roots of the wild gourd, the *chilicojote*, a powerful purgative. Green fruit of this most common pest, said Doña Ina, pounded to a pulp did wonders in the way of removing stains from clothing.

Then there was artemisia, *romero*, *azulea*, the blue-eyed grass of our meadows, upon an infusion of which fever patients can subsist for days, and elder flower, potent against spells; also there was Virgin's bower, which brought us back to the patio, for a great heap of it lay on the roof of the gallery, contesting the space there with the yellow banksia roses. I had supposed, until the Señora Echivarra mentioned it, that its purpose was purely ornamental, but I was to learn that it had come into the garden as a *yerba de chivato* about the time the barbed-wire fences of the Gringo began to make a remedy for cuts indispensable to the *ranchero* who valued the appearance of his live stock. When the eye, traveling along its twisty stems and twining leaf stalks, came to a clump of yarrow growing at the root of it, I began at once to suspect the whole garden. Was not the virtue of yarrow known even to the Greeks?

There was broad-leaved thyme flowering in the damp corner beyond the dripping faucet, and pot marigold, lavender, rosemary, and lemon verbena — all plants that have grown deep into the use and remembrance of man — roses and spotted musk. No friend of our race, not even the dog, has been more faithful. The stock of these had come overseas from Spain — were not the Phœnicians credited with introducing the pomegranate into Hispaniola? — and thence by way of the Missions.

All the borders of Doña Ina's garden were edged with rosy thrift, a European variety; and out on the headlands, a mile away, a paler, native cousin of it bloomed gayly with beach asters and yellow sand verbenas. But there was no one who knew by what winds, what communicating rootlets they had exchanged greetings.

Observation traveling by way of the borders came to the datura, which was to set the conversation off again, this time not of plants curative, but hurtful. We knew of the stupefying effects of the bruised pods and roots of

this species, and — this was my contribution — how the Paiute Indians used to administer the commoner variety, called *main-oph-weep*, to their warriors to produce the proper battle frenzy, and especially to young women about to undergo the annual ordeal of the 'Dance of Marriageable Maidens.' Every year at the spring gathering of the tribes the maidens piled their dowries in a heap, and for three days, fasting, danced about it. If they fell or fainted, it was a sure sign they were not yet equal to the duties of housekeeping and child-bearing; but I have had Paiute women tell me that they would never have endured the trial without a mild decoction of *main-oph-weep*.

'It was different, with us,' insisted Doña Ina; 'many a time we have danced to sunup over the mountain, and been ready to begin again the next evening. . . . We would sit about the wall,' she said, 'with our *dueñas*, and the young men would sit on their horses in an outer ring, and now and then one would give us the eye —' But I wished to talk of the properties of plants, not of young ladies.

The mystery of poison plants oppressed me. One may understand how a scorpion stings in self-protection, but what profit has the 'poison oak' of its virulence? It is not oak at all, but *rhus trilobata*, and in the spring whole hillsides are enlivened by the shining bronze of its young foliage or made crimson in September. The pollen that floats from it in May in clouds, the sticky sap, or even the acrid smoke from the clearing where it is being exterminated, is an active poison to the human skin, though I had not heard that any animal suffered similarly. Doña Ina opined that there was never an evil plant let loose in the gardens of the Lord but the remedy was set to grow beside it. A wash of manzanita tea, grindelia, or even buckthorn, she insisted, was excellent for poison oak. Best of all was a paste of pounded 'soaproot.' She knew a plant, too, which was corrective of the form of madness induced by the 'loco' weed whose pale foliage and delicately tinted, bladdery pods may be found always about the borders of the chaparral. For the convulsions caused by wild parsnip, there was the

wonder-working *yerba del pasmo*. This she knew also as a specific for snake-bite and *tetanus*. So greatly was it valued by mothers of families, in the time of the Spanish Occupation, that when a clearing was made for a house and patio, in any country where it grew, a plant or two was always left standing. But it was not until I had looked for it, where she said I would find it, between the oleander and the lemon verbena, that I recognized the common 'greasewood,' the *chamiso* of the mesa country.

'But were there no plants, Doña Ina, which had another meaning, flowers of affection, corrective to the spirit?'

'Angelica,' she considered, doubtfully. Young maids, in occasions of indecision, would pin a sprig of it across their bosoms, she said, and after they had been to church would find their doubts resolved; and there was yarrow which kept your lover true, particularly if you plucked it, with the proper ceremony, from a young man's grave.

Doña Ina quoted from a fascinating volume of her mother's time, the *Album Mexicana*,

in which the sentimental properties of all flowers were set forth. There was the camellia, a beautiful woman without virtue, and the pomegranate —

'But the flowers of New Spain, Doña Ina, was there nothing of these?' I insisted.

Of a truth, yes, there was the cactus flower, not the punta, the broad-leaved spiny sort of which hedges were grown in the old days, but the low, flamy-blossomed, prickly variety of hot, sandy places. If a young man wore such a one pinned upon his velvet jacket, it signified, 'I burn for you.'

'And if he wore no flower at all, how then?'

Doña Ina laughed, '*Si me quiero, no me quiero*'; she referred to the common yellow composite which goes by the name of 'sunshine,' or in the San Joaquin, where miles of it mixed with blue phacelias brighten with the spring, as 'fly-flower.' 'In the old Spanish playing cards,' said Doña Ina, 'the jack of spades had such a one in his hand, but when I was a girl no *caballero* would have been caught saying "love me, love me not"! They left all that to the señoritas.'

There was a Castilian rose growing beside me. Now a Castilian rose is not in the least what you expect it to be. It is a thick, cabbagy florescence, the petals short and not recurved, the pink hardly deeper than that of the common wild rose, the leafage uninteresting. One has to remember that it distinguished itself long before the time of the tea and garden hybrids, and, I suspect, borrowed half its charm from the faces it set off. For there was never but one way in the world for a rose to be worn, and that is the way Castilian beauties discovered so long ago that centuries have not made any improvement in it. Set just behind the ear and discreetly veiled by the mantilla, it suggests the effulgent charm of Spain tempered by mystery. Doña Ina had followed my glance and nodded acquiescence to my thought. 'In dressing for a *baile*, one would have as soon left off the rose as one's fan. One wore it even when the dress was wreathed with other flowers.'

'And did you, then, go wreathed in flowers?'

'Assuredly; from the garden if we had them, or from the field. I remember once I was all

blue larkspurs, here and here . . .' she illustrated on her person. 'And long flat festoons of the *yerba buena* holding them together.'

'It would have taken hoopskirts for that?' I opined.

'That also. It was the time that the waltz had been learned from the officers of the American ships, and we were quite wild about it. The good padre had threatened to excommunicate us all if we danced it . . . but we danced . . . we danced . . .' Doña Ina's pretty feet twitched reminiscently.

They danced *La Varzoviana* also, the *caballeros* most attractive in their blue vests with gold tassels and white rolling collars, red sashes, and black velvet, silver-buttoned trousers, slit up the outside seam to show the white underdrawers. There were spurs also, a foot long with six-inch rowels, but no *caballero* who valued his reputation as a gentleman would dance in spurs. They made *coplas* as they danced *La Jota*, impromptu rhyming compliments which were sung to the music of the dance. Doña Ina tried to give me 'Those Two Black Eyes that Guide to Homes of

Bliss,' which, considering that it must have been forty years since it had been sung to Doña Ina, did not go so badly. She tried, for my benefit, to recall the dictionary of the fan — there had been actually a book in which the whole alphabet of lovemaking had been spelled out on finger-joints with touches of *el abanico*, but Doña Ina scarcely recalled it. Her mother had been an adept, one of those women of her time who was not deterred from dancing or discreet flirtations by the appearance at regular intervals of a full dozen and a half of children; 'though,' said Doña Ina, 'my mother's was by no means the largest family.' With so full a house many things had gone on in the patio of the old Spanish hacienda, things that Doña Ina remembered, and others that she thought she remembered, old tales like that of the cross that Viscaino raised on the hill above the bay, which streamed forth light by night, and shed healing and benefactions on the wild tribes from its uplifted arms; tales like that of the Governor's glass eye, which the padre, for the spiritual advantage of the Indians, claimed as a miracle, until one, who

believed himself bewitched by it, smashed it. These, which must have been the food of her childhood, Doña Ina brought forth for me freshly furbished as things known, if not during her lifetime, at least in her mother's.

What she actually did remember was the Christmas performance of *Los Pastores*, here in the patio, while the family looked on and applauded from the *portale*, and afterward had the players in for hot chocolate and *sopaipas*. Doña Ina herself recalled playing the shepherdess in the house of the Governor, in a white dress all silver gilt, she being about twelve years of age, so that it might have been a true recalling and not a reminiscence of her mother's. She remembered the procession on Guadalupe Day and the blessing of the fields and all the lovely old Catholic customs of a kindlier age. She described the making of *cascarones* of blown eggshells filled with perfumed water and tinsel shreds. Weeks on end before a *fiesta* the housewives would be saving eggshells — only to break them in an instant's sport over the heads of unsuspecting dons and doñas. This touched upon romance,

the yellow rose that Sherman gave to Señorita Bonifacio, a shoot of which grew at Doña Ina's right hand. Thus we came to the garden again, and the patio lying so still, divided from the street by the high wall and the clouding fig and the gnarly pear tree. Beyond the artichokes a low partition wall shut off the vegetable plot; strings of chili reddened against it. There was not a blade of grass in sight, only the flat black adobe paths worn smooth by generations of treading, house and enclosing walls all of one earth.

'But if so much came into the garden from the field, Señora, did nothing ever go out?'

Ah, yes, yes — the land is gracious; there was mustard, of course — Doña Ina herself believed that all the wild mustard in California came from seed scattered by Padre Serra to mark his way from Mission to Mission — and pepper grass and hoarhound, blessed herb, which spread all over the land with healing. The pimpernel, too, crept out of the enclosing wall, and the tree mallow which came from the Channel Islands by way of the gardens and had become a common hedge

plant on the sandy lands about the Bay of San Francisco. Along streams which ran down from the unfenced gardens of the Americans, callas had domesticated themselves and lifted their pure white spathes serenely amid a tangle of mint and wild blackberries and painted cup. The almond, the rude stock on which the tender sorts were grafted, if allowed to bear its worthless bitter nuts, would take to hillsides naturally. It was not, after all, walls which held gardens, but water. This was all that constrained the commingling of wild and cultivated species; they cared little for man their benefactor. Give them water, said Doña Ina, and they came to your door like a fed dog, or, if you like the figure better, like grateful children. They repaid you with sweetness and healing.

A swift darted among the fig marigolds and portulaca of the inevitable rock work which was the pride of old Spanish gardens. Great rockets of tritoma flamed against the wall, on the other side of which traffic went unnoted and unsuspecting.

'But we, Doña Ina, we Americans, when

we make a garden, make it in the sight of all so that all may have pleasure in it.'

'Eh, the Americanos . . .' she shrugged. She moved to give a drink to the spotted musk, flowering in a chipped saucer; the subject did not interest her; her thought like her flowers had grown up in an enclosure.

THE LAND OF THE LITTLE DUCK

THE LAND OF THE LITTLE DUCK

WHERE the twin rivers set back the tides from the bay, the Land of the Little Duck begins. The tides come head on past the Golden Gate and the river answers to their tremendous compulsion far inland, past the point where the Sacramento and San Joaquin flow together. On the lee side of the headland which makes the southern pilaster of the Gate, sits San Francisco, making, of the name she borrowed from the bay, a new and distinguished thing, as some women do with their husbands' titles. A better location for a city is Carquinez Strait: the Mexican *comandante* resident at Sonoma would have had it there, bearing the name of his wife, Francesca. Said he to the newly arrived American authorities, 'Do so, and I will furnish you the finest site in the world with state house and residence complete.' But it appears the land had chosen its own name.

All the years after the Pope had divided the

new world between Spain and the Portuguese, the harbor behind the Golden Gate lay hidden. Cabrillo, Drake, Maldonado, Juan de Fuca, Viscaino, passed it in the night or veiled in obscuring fogs. And then Saint Francis showed it clear and lovely to a Don Gaspar Portolá, having for that revelation led him with holden eyes past his journey's objective, which was the rediscovery of the lost port of Monterey. Likewise, when the time was ripe, the Patron put it into the mind of the Yankee alcalde at Yerba Buena, a trading post in the neighborhood of Mission Dolores, that if the hamlet should be called San Francisco, it might catch by implication the vessels clearing all ports of the world for San Francisco Bay.

O Chance, Chance! says the historian and turns another page. But it is my opinion that among the birds to which Saint Francis preached was included the Little Duck.

The piers of the city front east; they face the Berkeley Hills, the Oaklands, the lands of the Sycamore, or, as the first settlers named them, the Alamedas. From thence vast settlements take their name, feeding the city as

sea-birds do, from their own breasts. Back and forth between them the shuttling ferries weave thin webs of glistening wakes, duck-bodied tugs chug and scuttle, busy still at world-building. From the promontory which makes the northern barrier of the Gate, Tamalpais swims out of atmospheric blueness. On its seaward slope, hardly out of reach of the siren's bellowing note, Muir Park preserves the ancient forest, rooted in the litter of a thousand years. And roundabout the foot of city and mountain the waters of the bay are blue; the hills are bluer. The hills melt down to greenness in the spring, the water runs to liquid emerald, flashing amber; the hills are tawny after rains, the waters tone to the turbid, clayey river floods; land and sea they pursue one another as lovers through changing moods of color: they have mists for mystery between revealing suns. Unless these things count for something, San Francisco is the very worst site for a city in the world. You take your heart in your mouth every time you go out to afternoon tea in the cable cars that dip and swing like cockles at sea.

They cut across streets so steep that grass grows between the cobbles where no traffic ever passes, to plunge down lanes of dwellings perched precariously as sea-birds' nests on the bare bones of hills that for true hilliness shame Rome's imperial seven. The bay side of the peninsula is mud, the Pacific side is sand. There great wasteful dunes blow up, they shift and pile, they take the contours of the wind-lashed waters — the very worst site in the world for a great city's pleasure ground, and yet somehow it is there.

For this city is one of those which have souls; it is a Spirit sitting on a height, taking to itself form and the offices of civilization. This is a thing that we know, because we have seen the land shake it as a terrier shakes a rat, until the form of the city was broken; it dissolved in smoke and flame. And then, as a polyp of the sea draws out of the fluent water form and perpetuity for itself, we saw our city draw back its shapes of wood and stone, and statelier, more befitting a Spirit that has endured so much. Nobody knows really what a city is except that it is something more than a

collocation of houses. From Telegraph Hill, where the old semaphore stood which signaled the far-between arrivals of ships around the Horn, you can see the trade of the world pass and repass the pillars of the Gate, the wall-sided warships. But none of these things really explain how San Francisco came to be clinging there to the leeward of a windy spit of land, like a great gray sea-bird with palpitating wings.

True to her situation, San Francisco is nothing if not dramatic. One recalls that the earliest foundation was dedicated to Our Lady of Dolors; the Indians fought here as they did nowhere else against Christian dominion. There were more burials than baptisms, and in the old cemetery of Yerba Buena the dead were so abandoned of all grace that the sand refused to hold them. One who spent his boyhood in the shifting purlieus of the old Laguna told me how, in the hollows where the scrub oaks shrugged off the wind and the sand waved like water, the nameless coffins were covered and uncovered between a night and day. But if the dead could not hold their tenancy, the

living succeeded. They did it by the very force of that dramatic instinct awakened by the plot and counterplot of natural forces.

No Greek tragedy moved to more relentless measures than the moral upheaval of '56, when the whole city, moving in solemn funeral train behind the victim of one of those wild outbursts of lawlessness peculiar to the 'gold rush,' saw the lifeless bodies of the perpetrators hanging from the upper windows of the Vigilance Committee. Fifty years later came a wilder route, down streets searched out by fire, snatching at humor as they ran as so many points of contact for the city's rebuilding.

The very worst location in the world, as I have remarked, this windy promontory past which the gray tides race, but so long as a city can dramatize itself, one situation will do as well as another in which to render itself immortal.

The Bay of San Francisco and its contingencies is one of the most interesting of inland yachting waters, full of adventurous weather. It is possible to sail in one general direction

from Alviso to the city of Sacramento, a hundred and fifty miles, and that without attempting the hundreds of miles of estuary and slough through which the waters slink and wind. At this season of the year the river is pushed backward by the tide a matter of ten miles or more above Sacramento City; on the San Joaquin it is felt as far as Crow's Landing. At Antioch it begins to be saltish and down through Suisun and Carquinez, the river water fights its way as far as San Pablo before its identity is wholly lost. At flood times it may be traced, a yellowish, turgid streak, as far as Alcatraz. This is the islet of the albatross which lies south of the tide race, as Tiburon is on the north, fragments, all of them, of that salt-rimed ledge outside the Gate where hoarse sea lions play, and brother to the castellated cloud Farallon on the sea's horizon, the very capital of the Kingdom of the Little Duck.

The Farallon Light is the last dropped astern by the island steamships sagging south to the Equator; it is also the sea-bird's city of refuge. This is the great murre rookery of the west coast, and formerly thousands of dozens

of eggs were regularly taken from the Farallons to the San Francisco market, but since the islands became a Government station, the murres have no enemy but the pirates of the air. In clefts and ledges close against the wall-sided cliffs, they defend their shallow nests against the sheering gulls, or, hard beset, will push their single new-hatched nestling into the friendlier sea, darting to break its fall with incredible swiftness, for a swimming gait is one of the things that come out of the shell with the native born at the Farallons. On the same shelving rocks, puffins rear their ratty young in burrows or under sheltering boulders, and the ashy petrel, the 'little Peter' of the sea, walking by night before the storm, comes ashore here to hide his infrequent nest. On the south Farallon the fierce cormorant builds her house of painted weed, which often the gulls steal from her as fast as she brings it ashore, for the gulls are the grafters of the seabirds' city. This particular variety, known as the Western gull, neither fishes for himself nor forages for building material. He feeds on the eggs and nestlings of his neighbors, or

waits to snatch the day's catch from the beak that brought it up from the sea. He has the virtue of all predatory classes, an exemplary domesticity. His nest is soft and clean, his nestlings handsome. The Western gull is often found marauding far up the estuary of Sacramento, but it is his congener, the herring gull, who follows the long white wake the ferries make ploughing the windy bay: or, distinguished among the silent shore birds for multitude and clamor, scavenges its reedy borders.

Except for the promontories north and south and the bold front of the Berkeley Hills, opposing the Gate, the inland borders of the bay are flat tidelands and sea-smelling lagunas. Stilts, avocets, herons, all the waders that haunt this coast or visit it in their seasonal flights, may be seen stalking the shallows for minnows, or, where the marsh grass reddens, poised like strange tideland blossoms, lifted on two slender stems. Low over them any clear day may be seen the gray old marsh hawk sailing, or the 'duck hawk,' the peregrine of falconry, following fiercely in the

wake of the migrating hordes of water fowl. All about Alviso the guttural cry of the black-crowned night heron sounds eerily above the marshes, along with the peculiar 'pumping' love song of the bittern.

For some reason the air of the marshes is friendly to the mistletoe infesting the oaks and sycamores which stand back from the tide line; but the marshes themselves are treeless. They have their own sorts of growth, cane and cattails and tule, goosefoot, samphire, and the tasseled sedges. This samphire of Shakespeare, '*l'herbe de Saint Pierre*' of the Normandy marshes, is the glory of the Franciscan tidelands. Miles of it, barely above the level of the slow-moving water, spread a magic carpet of blending crimsons, purples, and bronzes. Under the creeping mists and subject to the changes of the water, beaten to gold and copper under the sun, it redeems the flat lines of the landscape with the touch of Oriental splendor.

For it is a flat Kingdom, that of the Little Duck; — the hills hanging remotely on the horizon, the few trees, and scattered, hugging

the low shore of the sloughs as the shipwrecked cling to their rafts, desperate of rescue. The rich web of the samphire, the shifting color of the water, faintly reminiscent of Venice, borrow another foreign touch from the names under which the borders are recommended to attention: Sausalito, 'little willows,' Tiburon, Corta Madero, San Quentín, San Rafael. Approached from the water these names, with the exception of San Quentín, do no more than stir the imagination. San Quentín, on one of those courtesy islands newly rescued from the primordial mud, shows itself uncompromisingly for what it is, one of those places for the sequestration of public offenders which is itself an offense to our common humanity to say nothing of our common sense. Free tides, free sails go by, and long, untrammeled lines of birds. South, beyond the blue bay and bluer shore, the ethereal blue dome of Diablo lifts into the free air. Across the upper end of San Pablo Bay, which is really the north arm of the Bay of San Francisco, extending inland, Mare Island lies so low on the water that if it had not been made a naval re-

serve station, it is difficult to know to what other use it could be put. One expects to have the land dip and swing from under like the ship's deck. It is in line with the guns which lie beside the Gate like watchful, muzzle-pointed dogs, and commands the whole upper bay and the opposing bluffs of Contra Costa in a manner highly commendable to those curious persons whose chief excitement lies in anticipating an Asiatic invasion. Nevertheless, along with the bastions of San Quentín, it strikes somehow, the note of human distrust amid all this charm of light and line and elusive color, as if suddenly one should discover the tip of a barbed tail under the skirt of some seductive stranger.

Between San Quentín and the Straits, all about the curve of the bay, winding, wide-mouthed sloughs give access to a land as fertile as Egypt. A slough is a mere wallow of unprofitable waters, waters unused by men and still reluctant of the sea. Pushed aside by the compelling tides, too undisciplined to make proper banks for themselves, they are neglected by all but a few fringing willows and

shapeless sycamores in which the herons nest.

Often at evening white-faced ibises can be seen flying in long, voiceless lines, just clearing the twilight-tinted water, to their accustomed night perches in the wind-beaten willows. They return there, if undisturbed, year after year, accompanied in few and far between seasons by the egret and snowy heron, grown man-shy, or, if they but knew the purpose for which their nuptial plumage is sacrificed, woman-shy, and seldom seen even by the most wishful eyes.

At Napa a few bull-headed oaks come down almost to the tide line, and in Sonoma a clump of alien blue gums huddles aloof and unregarded. But from the water little is visible besides the stilted cabins of some gun club or the ramshackle resorts of the flat-nosed, slow craft that wind on mysterious errands between the sunken lands. Whole families of half-amphibious humans appear to live comfortably on these drifting scows, but one never by any chance catches them doing any distinctive thing.

The waters of the sloughs come down from

the little inland valleys where summer nests and broods in a blue haze along the redwood serried hills. Whether the countryside is white with cherry bloom at Napa, or purple with winey clusters at Sonoma, there is always something interesting going on there of the large process by which granite mountains are made food for man. It is worth a visit if only to learn that a country, which does that sort of thing supremely well, finds it also worth while to do it beautifully. Yachting off San Rafael, it is possible to catch at times the scent of roses on an offshore wind, above the salt smell of the marshes.

The last rip of the tide is through the Straits of Carquinez into the backwater of Suisun. From this point there is a rhythmic heaving to and fro as of well-matched wrestlers; the river water is set back to Crow's Landing on the San Joaquin, and miles above Sacramento, it returns again past Antioch and the Suisun Islands. It is lost in a wilderness of tules, through which the sluggish currents blindly wind. Here we have nothing to do with men; our business is all with the tribe

of the Little Duck: mallard, teal, tern, coot, heron, eared grebe, and awkward loon.

The tule is a round, leafless reed. It springs up along the tidelands or in the stagnant backwater of the rivers or by any least dribble of a desert spring. No condition daunts it but absolute dearth of water; far called, it travels on the wind over mountain ranges, over great wastes of waterless plain, to find the one absolute condition, a pool — white-rimmed with alkali or poisonous green with arsenic. I have seen it flourish by springs so charged with mineral that each slender column is ringed with a stony deposit, but I do not recall any standing water where tules are not. The stem is filled with papery pith so light that the Indians of the San Joaquin made boats of bundles of them, fagoted together and tied upon a wooden frame. These *balsas* used to ply by scores along the secret runways of the sloughs, and the first explorers made plentiful use of them.

Year by year the tules reclaim the muddy confluence of the twin rivers. They make an annual growth, die standing, and are beaten

down by the wind. Between their matted stems the young green comes up again. In the Land of the Little Duck miles upon miles of them — and not one other thing — stand up on either side the winding water lanes, man-high and impenetrable.

The tulares — the places of the tule — are the haunts not only of water-birds, but of innumerable insect-catchers, and especially of the red-winged blackbirds. In the spring these betake themselves to the reed-fringed marshes in hundreds, building their nest in such neighborly proximity that the young can hop from rim to rim of the tight-slung, grassy hammocks. Great clouds of the young birds can be seen just before mating and after nesting in the fall, rising from the low islands of the river junction. In the season also the male yellow-headed blackbird may be heard singing his sweet but noisy cheering-song to his somber mate as she weaves marsh grass and wet pondweed together as a foundation for her home, always prudently completed some weeks in advance of any need of it.

Where the tules thin out along the moving

currents, numerous woven balls of marsh vegetation hang like some strange fruit safely above the summer rise of the waters. These are the nests of the tule wren, built by the industrious male, with who knows what excess of parental care or what intention to deceive. All the while he is at work upon his clever pretenses, in one, the least conspicuous and to the casual eye the least skillfully built, the mother bird nurses the brown nestlings with which, suddenly, at the end of July all the whispering galleries of the tulares are alive.

One who has the courage to penetrate deeper within the tulares, past the crazy wooden landings of nameless ports at which the flat scows put in, past the broken willows where the herons nest and the weedy backwaters are all smoothly green with the deceptive duckweed, will see many wished-for sights. Just before dawn and after nightfall the inner marshes are vocal with the varied cries of coot and mallard and the complaining skirl of the mud-hen, the whistling red-wing, the bittern booming from his dingy pool, and all the windy beat of wings. But by day a

stillness falls through which the clicking whisper of the reeds and the croon of the great rivers, cradling to the sea, quickens the sense almost as without sound. The air is all alive with the metallic glint of dragonflies; now and then the plop of some shining turtle dropping into the smooth lagoon, or the frightened splash of some marsh nesting bird, skims the silence. Here one might see all the duck kind leading forth their young broods, or the eared grebe swimming with her day-old nestlings on her back. If the day is dark, black cloud with lightnings playing under, one may hear the voice of the loon sliding through his sonorous scale to shaking, witless laughter. Or perhaps the day's sight might be a flock of pelicans on their way to their nesting ground in Buena Vista, breasting the shallows while with beating wings they drive a school of minnows into some tiny inlet, there to be scooped up in the pouched bills, a dozen to a mouthful. Better still, some morning mist might lift for you suddenly on a strip of sandy shore the cranes had chosen for their wild dances, from which the stately measures of the Greek are said to

be derived. Or it might show the solemn dipping of the pelicans, on one of their nesting islands, white, wing-spread draperies against the yellow sand like figures on an ancient Attic vase.

Always at evening in the tulares the air is winnowed by the clanging hordes of geese and ducks. Triangular flights of teal go by you, whizzing like bullets, hazy with speed. Beach nesting birds, paddlers in the foodful creeks, go seaward. Now and then some winged frigate of the open sea, an albatross perhaps blown inland on a storm, will climb the air to the sea-going wind. Low on the twilight-colored waters, the tule fog creeps in.

You emerge properly from the vast intricacies of the tulares — if you emerge at all, and are not completely mazed and lost in them — at Sacramento, a city but barely rescued from the marsh, and still marsh-colored with the damp-loving lichens. *La Dame aux Camélias*, to the eye, rich in that exotic blossom as no city in the world, but with a past, oh, unmistakably, and a touch of hectic disorder. The Russians possessed her, and

then the breed of Jack Hamlin, and then — but it is unfair to list the lovers of a lady of so much charm and such indubitable capacity for reformation. Sacramento is the State capital, the geographical pivot of the great twin valleys; she divides with Stockton on the San Joaquin the tribute of her waters. It was here on her banks that the overland emigrant trains sat down to wait for the subsidence of waters in the new world of the West. From here they scattered to all its hopeful quarters.

If the part the city has played in history has been that of a hostel, a distributing station, at least she has played it to some purpose. There are few empires richer than the land the twin rivers drain.

THE TWIN VALLEYS

THE TWIN VALLEYS

It is geographical courtesy merely to treat of intramontane California as a valley; it is, in reality, a vast rolling plain. Several little kingdoms of Europe could be tucked away in it. North and south it has no natural line of demarcation other than the rivers meeting for their single assault upon the sea, but its diversity deserves the double name. They make — the Sacramento rushing from the wooded north and the sluggish San Joaquin — one of the most interesting waterways of the world. I should say they made, for of the San Joaquin one must be able to speak in the past also, to understand it. One must have seen it before man had tamed it and taught it, supine as a lioness in the sun.

To arrive at a proper feeling of the continuity of the great central plain, it must be approached from the south, by way of the old Tejon Pass, up from San Fernando, or down the Tehachapi grade, where the railroad loops

and winds through the confluence of the Coast Range with the Sierra Nevada. Here the hills curve graciously about the vast oval of the lower San Joaquin. The down-throw of the mountain, stippled with sagebrush, gives way to tawny sand glistening here and there with white patches of alkali, mottled with dark blocks of irrigated land. Its immensity is obscured by the haze of heat.

One is reduced to the figures of the real estate booster for terms of proportion. That modest checkering of green, hours away to the left, is a forty-mile field of alfalfa; beyond it lie the vineyards that in less than a quarter of a century relegated Spain to a second place in the raisin industry of the world. This is the San Joaquin of to-day and to-morrow. The white, tilted vans of the Argonauts saw it as one vast overlapping field of radiant corollas, blue of lupines, phacelias, nemophilas, gold of a hundred packed species of composite. Wet years it is still possible for the settler in the unirrigated districts to wake some morning to blossomy lakes of sky-blueness in the hollows. From San Emigdio in the Temblors I have

seen, across the whole width of the valley, the smouldering poppy fires along the bluffs of Kern River. On the mesa below Tejon the moon-white gilia, that the children call 'evening snow,' unfurls its musky-scented drifts mile after mile. But the prevailing note of the San Joaquin is tawny russet. Gold it will be in the season, resplendent as those idols which the Incas overlaid yearly with fresh-beaten leaf. In September the tall *barrancas* above Bakersfield and Visalia are yellow as brass, but all up and down the hill-rimmed hollow is every lion-colored tint contending still with the thin belts of planted orchard.

Twenty-five years of cultivation have served to shift the lines of greenness, but not greatly to modify the desert key. Once the green was all massed in the tulares which fringed the series of lakes and connecting sloughs. Continuing northward from the lowest point of the San Joaquin, Kern, Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Merced, and Tuolumne, mighty rivers and a hundred lesser singing streams, fed it. Elk by thousands ramped in its reedy borders. It was a haven of nesting water birds. Whole

islands were populated by pelicans, repairing there annually for the strange, sidling wing dances that attend their mating. Blue herons nested in the tulares; they could be seen trailing their long dangly legs, for hours above the shallows. Indians paddled in their frail *balsas*, built of papery, dry reeds, down intricate water lanes in which white men, venturing, lost themselves and were mazed to madness. Malaria of a surpassing virulence rode up and down that country on the 'tule fogs.' Even yet it is the dread of the cities of the plain to find themselves beleaguered by the thick, ghost-white mists that at long intervals roll along the ground, retaking the ancient marshes.

Into this potential opulence the cattle man precipitated himself. He bought — it is more exact to say, he acquired — vast acreage of Spanish grants. Along the rim of the Coast Ranges territory equal to principalities was given over to long-horned, lean herds. All about the old beach line of the San Joaquin may still be seen the remnant of the cattle ranches, low, formless houses with purlieus of pomegranate and pampas grass and black

figs, and the high, stockaded, acrid-smelling corrals, to mark the receding waves of the cattle industry. On the Sierra side the guttered mesas, the hoof-worn foothills advertise the devastation of the wandering flocks. Early in the sixties there appeared little, long-armed French and Basques, with hungry hordes of sheep at their heels, pasturing on the public lands. They ate into the roots of the lush grass and left the quick rains to cut the soil. The wool in the hand was always worth the next season's feed to the sheep herder.

Never was a land so planned for the uses of man, its shielding mountains, its deep alluvial terraces sloping gently to the sun. Men read this assurance in the hieroglyphic the glistening waters spelled between the dark patches of the tulares, but years of experimenting were necessary to read the message aright.

After the cattle and the flocks came the wheat. Up from the meeting waters the land billowed with grain. Owners buckled their ploughs together and drove them with engines by tens and twenties across the thou-

sand-acre fields. But men and engines, they were alike driven by the drouth. In wet years the wheat rancher rode to view his shoulder-high harvest, but when the rains, going high and wide over the valley to break along the saw teeth of the Sierras, left the wheat unwatered, the same thing happened to the crops that had happened to the cattle and the sheep. And at last, amid the rotting carcasses and the shriveled acres, the message came clear. Not the land, but the water. So they shut up the rivers in the cañons and the day of the orchardist began.

Geographically it begins at Bakersfield, below the gap where the Kern comes down from the giant sequoias and is constrained to the wide, willow-planted canals, governed by headgates and weirs. Such waters as find again their ancient levels do so by way of the loose sandy soil through which they are filtered in vineyard and orchard. The tulares have been turned under, the elk are strictly preserved in the hope that enough of them will breed to serve the purposes of curiosity. The antelope bands, that once flashed their white

rumps from bench to bench of the tawny mesas, were reduced, the last time I saw them, to a scant half-score roving the Tejon under the watchful eye of the superintendent. But with all this change, nowhere as at this diminished end does one gather such an impression of the variety, the imperial extent of the San Joaquin. For at Bakersfield is one of the world's largest petroleum fields. The gaunt derricks rear along the unwatered hills like half-formed, prehistoric creatures come up out of the ground to see what men are about. Reservoirs fed with the stinking juices of a time decayed, squat along the *barrancas*, considering with a slow, leech-like intelligence the tank cars, that, in the form of a Gargantuan joint worm of the same period that produced the derricks, clank between the oil fields and the town. One of the largest oil fields in the world — and yet the turn of the road drops it out of sight in the valley's immensity.

Bakersfield is a heaven of roses. Doubtless there are other things by which the inhabitants would be glad to have it remembered.

but this is the item that the traveler in the season carries away with him. Roses do not die there; they fall apart of their own sweetness, wafts of which envelop the town for miles out on the highway. After nightfall, when each particular attar distils upon the quiescent air, the townspeople walk abroad in the streets and the moon comes up full-orbed across the Temblors at about the level of the clock-tower. Overhead and beyond it the sky retains a deep velvety blueness until long past midnight. Traces of color can be seen sometimes still in the zenith when the glimmer along the knife-edge of the Sierras announces the dawn.

North of Bakersfield as the valley widens, the Coast Range fades to a mere shadow mountain, the peaks of Kaweah stand out above the banded haze, angel white like the ranked Host. Broad-headed oaks begin to appear as the road swings in to the Sierra outposts; it skirts the foot of the great Sierra fault, close enough for the landscape to borrow something from the dark, impending pines. But for the most part what the observer has

to consider is soil and water and the miraculous product of these two. One must learn to think of the land in terms of human achievement.

North from the delta of Kern River lies a hundred miles of country scarcely disputed with the flocks, far called and few, which still at the set time of the year converge in green swales behind the town for the annual shearing. After which the herders foregather to play handball at Noriegas, or to grow riotously claret drunk and render an evanescent foreign touch to the brisk modern community.

Every foot of that hundred-mile stretch is rife with the seeds of life, awaiting the touch of the impregnating water. One holds to this conviction as to a friendly assuring hand, in the presence of that vast plain, palpitating with the heat, the sluggish untamed water lolling in the midst of it, the white-fanged Sierra combing the cloudless blue. Beauty becomes a poor word; appreciation is shipwrecked and cast away. With relief one hails the beginning of a stripe, dark green, scal-

loping the foothills — the citrus belt. From Portersville, Lindsay, Exeter, it runs north past the meeting of the waters into the valley of the Sacramento, and for quality and early fruiting sets the figure of the world market. As if its waters had some special virtue, wherever a river is poured out upon the plain some particular crop is favored. About Fresno it is raisins; at Madera port wine, sherry, and mild muscatel. The Merced which takes its rise in the valley of Yosemite, is partial to melons and figs. But everywhere are prunes, peaches, apricots, almonds, sugar beets, alfalfa, unmeasurable acreage of barley, beans, and asparagus. Anything is impressive if the scale be large enough, even a field of onions. Here the league-long rows of green lances are as terrible as an army.

Up and down this empire belt proceed two great companies, the hordes of 'fruit-hands' and the army of the bees following its successive waves of fruit and bloom. Gangs of pruners, pickers, and packers are shifted and shunted as the crop demands. Interesting economic experiments transact themselves

under the worried producer's eye, alien race contending with alien race. The jarring interests of men have by no means worked out the absolute solution, but the bees have long ago settled their business. They kill the drones and gather the honey for the gods who kindly provide them with hives — the more fortunate, perhaps, in knowing what their particular gods want.

Wherever along the belt the rivers fail, the pumps take up the work; strenuous little Davids contending against the Goliaths of drouth. They can be heard chugging away like the active pulse of the vineyards, completing the ribbon of greenness that spans from ridge to ridge of the down-plunging hills.

And then one must take account of the cities of the plain! Twenty-five years ago they fringed the Sierra base, mere feeders to the mines, the cattle ranches, the sheep country. They had the manners of the frontier, and the decaying, tawdry vices that filtered down from San Francisco, sluiced out by intermittent spasms of reform. They were 'wide open.' Hairy little herders with jabbering tongues

knifed one another in the shearing season, *vaqueros* 'shot up the town' occasionally; it is still within memory that prominent citizen 'packed a gun' for prominent citizen. Twenty years ago the last, most southerly of the chain of settlements was a very cesspool of the iniquities driven to a last stand by the influx of homeseekers. I who went through the years of change with it could tell tales if I would — but, thank Heaven, nobody would believe them! Now in those old places of unsavory renown rise handsome 'business blocks,' the true mark of cities. Homes heaped with roses spread on either side of miles of palm-fringed boulevard. Over it all flows the clear, inspiring current of Sierra-cooled air, sliding down from the ranked peaks that, whitened from flank to flank by perpetual snows, hover like phalanxes of protecting wings.

Into the very thick of the cities drop down from the high Sierras, trails to all its places of delight, the sequoia groves, Kings River Cañon, and all the lordly peaks about Mount Whitney and Yosemite. Still setting hillward from San Francisco runs the old Stockton–

Sonora road along which surged the undisciplined rout of the gold-seekers of forty-nine. It leads, this earliest of valley highways, across the basin of the Stanislaus, past places made famous by the red-shirted, lusty miners, the sleek-coated gamblers of Bret Harte. It passes the Twenty-Eight Mile House where Jack Hamlin ran a poker game, and many a scene rendered memorable by the gay ladies of Poker Flat. It reaches, by way of a deep-rutted, ancient track, choked with the characteristic red dust of the country, Table Mountain, the home of Truthful James. Table Mountain, having consideration for the near-by Sierras, is a hill topped with a flat deposit of *malpais*, the 'black rock' of regions far north and east. Beyond Sonora lie the old placer 'diggings,' every foot of which has been combed and sifted for gold. The bones of the earth are laid bare, all the masking clay, tossed and tumbled, clogged with rusty pipes and decaying sluices, lies in heaps and depressions where the gold-seekers cast it. The sense of violation is heightened by the hue of the soil, redder than the hills of Devon, redder than a

red heifer — but the river furnishes the more descriptive figure, the martyr hue of the Sacrament. In the flood season it carries the tint of its ensanguined clays far down into the bay's blueness.

The remnant of that riotous life, the abandoned cabins, the towns falling into dissolution, like the remaining specimens of the fir and redwood forests cut off to timber the Mother Lode, is left standing by unfitness. The best of it is a little nugget of remembrance of Francis Bret Harte and Mark Twain.

It was at Angels in the foothills of Calaveras that Twain, to his everlasting fame, was so impressed with the performance of the Jumping Frog. But life at Angels and all up and down that placer country is as heavy with desuetude as the frog was after the barkeeper had fed him with buckshot. As well try to get a draught of that old time as a drink at any of the dismantled bars, high, ornate black walnut affairs across which, in dust and nuggets, passed and repassed probably as much gold as would serve to buy the orange belt of the San Joaquin — and, for a figure of

magnificence, you would find nothing more acceptable to its inhabitants.

Much of the history of that country is written in the names. Here the soft Spanish locutions give place to harsher, but not less descriptive, Americanisms — Jimtown, Jackass Hill, Squaw Creek; the cañons become 'gulches'; the mesas, 'flats.' Later both of these were overlaid by '-villes' and '-tons,' the plain rural names of Anglo-Saxon derivation, Coulterville, Farmington, Turlock. They smell of orchards. Prosperity is coming back on the surface of the fruitful waters, but the redwood forests have not come back. Centuries, nothing less, are required for the building of one of these towers of greenness, and it is barely fifty years since all that district was one roaring blast of mining life, rioting, jostling, snatching each from each. In the language of the country, the Italian truck gardeners will 'beat them to it.' They have smoothed over the old 'slickins' and comforted the land with crops.

As one travels north, the bulk of the Sierras lessens, the pines climb higher, the oaks

march well down into the middle valley to catch the wet coast winds, the character of the plantations changes, there are more grain fields, more neat little farms. Finally the old Overland Emigrant Trail climbs down from Donner Lake and Emigrant Gap, and you find yourself deep in the valley of the Sacramento.

By an air line from the meeting of the waters, its geographical frontier is passed in the neighborhood of Sonora, perhaps the bridge over the Mokelumne is a better indicator since that river joins the San Joaquin at the estuary, but it is not until the Overland Road is crossed that the character of the country definitely betrays the upper valley.

Ascending the river, the works of man are less and less, the forest and the mountains more. The rapid rise of the wooded slopes keeps the Sacramento troublous. Tributaries, not large but swift and of tremendous volume, pour into it. Occasionally from dark cañons is heard the steady pound of the quartz mill, working some ancient lead, or a smelter blocks out a whole forested slope with its poisonous

exhalations; but for the most part the northern valley is given over to brooding quiet, to unending green and streams as swift as adders.

In Mendocino County on the coast side the range begins to lift toward the snow line; on the Sierra side the alpine crest shears away. From time to time the 'logging' industry cuts a wide track down the redwood forest. One hears above the singing rivers the clucking of the donkey engine or the rip of a mill still going in the midst of its self-created sawdust desert. The glutting of the lumber region has been accomplished as wastefully, as violently as the search for gold. All up the valley, tall prophets of the rain have been butchered to make a lumberman's fat purse. But link by link, the forestry bureau is closing up the line of the reserves against the lumber 'kings,' the Ahabs of a grasping time.

The hills fall into a certain order, serried rank on rank. Deciduous growth of the lower slopes gives way to redwoods and Shasta fir. Miles upon miles of them stand so thick that when one dies it does not fall, but remains

erect in the arms of its brothers. Great columnar boles rise out of the river basins, soaring high over what, except for their dwarfing proportions, would be a considerable grove of graceful oak and bay and glistening, magnolia-leafed, crimson-shafted madroño. Over these the redwoods rise, as over the heads of worshipers the clustered columns of Milan seek the dome. High up the tops are caught in a froth of green foliage through which the sunlight filters blue. This characteristic refraction from their yellowish, inch-long needles dwells about the redwood as an aura, and far on the horizon distinguishes their ranks from the hill slopes masked with pines. So, blue ridge on ridge, they advance on the imperious height of Shasta.

Shasta is a brother of Fuji and Tacoma; one of those solitary crater peaks whose whiteness is the honorable age of fiery youth, a good mountain dead and gone to heaven. Do not go up on it; you will see a great deal more of what you have seen, wooded hills on hills and perhaps the sapphire belt of the sea, the glitter of lovely sailless lakes, but you

will not understand it any better. Shasta has no more to do with the abutting ranges than a great genius with the stock which produced him. This is a prophet among mountains, a vent from the burning heart of creation. One is not surprised to learn that the Indians hereabout count their descent from the Spirit of Shasta and the Grizzly Bear. That dark belt of forest circling the mountain's base looks to be the proper haunt for him, the lumbering, little-eyed embodiment of brute creation. It is well to think of those two things together, the rip of those mighty claws with a ton or two of brute bulk behind them, and the awful whiteness towering to the blue, and suffer the soul-satisfying fear that lies in wait for man in the great places of the earth. All our modern fears are mean, fears of the common opinion and the bill collector. Shasta will have done its best for you if it enables you to quake in the very marrow of consciousness.

After this it is time to turn southward along the Coast Range, camping by the trout-abounding rivers, losing yourself in

the stiff laurels and azaleas of Mendocino, fishing at the clear lakes cupped in the hollows. If the season is right there will be salmon fishing in Klamath and Trinity Rivers or deer in the steep-sided cañons. And everywhere there will be the redwoods. It is not, however, in the crowds that the tree reveals itself. Far down the deforested hills of Sonoma, in isolated groves, in small groups or singles on the tops of bossy, brass-colored hills, it takes on character and charm.

A redwood grove is a three-story affair. On the ground floor, turned rusty brown as though the sunlight filtering through had mellowed there a thousand years, creeps the wild ginger, the rosy-flowered oxalis, trilliums, and violets. All these lower rooms are crowded with dogwood, with the great-berried manzanitas, woodwardias, man-high, and glistening bays, silver-tipped with light. By one of those strange but charming affinities of wild life, the redwood grove is the peculiar haunt of lilies. Every variation of the soil — the peat bogs of the coast, the

high sandy ridges, the damp meadows — has each its appropriate variety. And not merely lilies, but droves of them, hundreds of swaying stems, files of them up the line of seeping springs or round the bases of great boulders, lilies man-high, lilies overhead, ruby-spotted, golden-throated, shining-white, dowered with the special genius of perfume. Along the chaparral-covered slope and deep within the cañons, one tracks them by the subtle, intoxicating scent spreading, as I am persuaded no other perfume does, by a conscious distillation on the melting air.

The second redwood story, that wondrous space of blue diffusing sun, between the deciduous under forest and the fairy web of redwood green, is bird and squirrel haunted. Jays flash back and forth, bright flickers of the humming-bird go buzzing by. Woodpeckers may be heard calling the ever-missing 'Jacob, Jacob!' who must in their opinion be concealing himself somewhere about the upper story. The wire-drawn warble of the brown creeper follows the singer up and down the deeply corrugated

trunks. Wrens, sparrows, juncos, all manner of little feathered folk in whose coats the tones of brown predominate, frequent the pillared middle rooms. Once I heard what I thought to be a hermit thrush, singing out of the dusk of Muir Wood. But I have not the art of knowing birds by note. People who live much in the redwoods find them silent. I think it might more easily be that the great trunks and green-shot glooms have the same quality of dwarfing sound as size. Redwoods as I know them are really lighter and more alive than any other coniferous forests, but the *effect* of umbrageous stillness is induced by vast proportions.

As for what goes on in the upper rooms, who has been there? What birds arise to their three or four hundred-foot heights? The few and slight boughs, the feathery layers of foliage rounding in age to sloping crowns, who knows them but the wind and the snows that neither stir nor are stayed by them? There are some matters that the great Twin Valleys keep even from the men for whom they have borne an empire.

SAGEBRUSH COUNTRY

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SAGEBRUSH, the silvery pubescent *Artemisia tridentata*, is no sage, nor yet brushy as are the spined and brittle members of the chaparral. It has a twisty woody base and herbaceous tops, well feathered with gray-green velvet leafage, and grass-like tips of self-colored, aromatic seed. 'Tridentata' it is called because of the three-lobed leaves, and 'Artemisia,' being sacred to young Artemis, hung up in her temple in votive wreaths. Always there is about the sagebrush that virginal suggestion, shy-colored, fresh-smelling, sufficient to itself. Descriptively, 'sagebrush country' stands for a type of landscape as distinctive as the moors of England or the Campagna of Italy. As Highlanders once spoke of 'taking heather,' so Westerners 'take to the sagebrush.'

Sagebrush is of that singular plant company, the social shrubs, tolerating little else in lands they have preëmpted for their own.

Mile upon mile it circles the higher levels about the Sierra base, and spreads over high intramontane valleys. Other shrubs — larrea, pursia, dalea — may be found in patches, in dry hollows or sandy wastes, but none give such character to the country where they are found as does that pale web of sage green against the sunburnt land. Once it gave the prevailing note over all the level mesas of the treeless southern country, circling the oval of the San Joaquin Valley, spreading seaward from the Sierra Madre, and east illimitably from the Sierra Nevada. Now it is found only on those lands man has no other use for, open country, great space of pale sky, what the inhabitants call, 'eye-reach,' mountains hanging on the horizon in opalescent haze. It flows evenly over flowing contours of hills overlaid by the 'black rock,' old lava flows simulating cloud shadows on the flanking ranges, dry red cones of ancient ash. The chief virtue of the sagebrush is that it can flourish on a water allowance that will support no life larger than the chipmunk or chuckwalla, and, in growing, pro-

duce unequaled pasture. It is therefore indispensable to any picture of the sagebrush country that there should be cropping herds, and *vaqueros* riding, or, far down the bleached valley, the dust of a *rodeo* rising. It is impossible to think of such a land and not think of these things; free life and air as clear and vibrant with vitality as a bell. I can never think of it myself without seeing, in addition, the vultures making a merry-go-round over Panamint, and up from Coso the creaking line of a twenty-mule team.

The sagebrush country of California begins properly at the foot of the Sierras where the State line sheers east by south from Lake Tahoe. Sagebrush covers the high valleys that divide the true Sierra from the older, lesser ranges that keep it company as far south as Olancha. Below Mono Lake, that part of the gold region made immortal by Mark Twain, it stipples the chrome and ocher-tinted soil with silver. From the long arm of Death Valley the sage begins to be encroached upon by the mesquite, and at Indian Wells it is driven close under the

ramp of the last Sierra. The range of which San Bernardino and San Jacinto are outposts, carries the artemisia desertward until the shifting, root resisting sand defeats it. South again about the Salton Sea it holds its own with cactus and palo verde. Its eastern border, like that of the wild tribes along the Mohave line, is lost. Over Kaibab it goes and beyond the Colorado to the Painted Desert.

Along the littoral of Southern California, rises, of summer mornings, a cloud of fog, a rain-colored veil of sea-vapor, always promising and seldom performing the promise to dissolve as rain. It lifts and spreads inland, stretches as a tent, and thins upward into sky. All a summer day it hangs motionless, or is split by a sea-wind that rises where the Channel Islands begin to temper the summer heat. Not often the velo cloud — so it is called — drifts over the saddle of San Bernardino or through the San Gorgonio Pass; only at the turn of spring it enfilades between the Temblors and reaches the lower San Joaquin. Yet, somehow, my whole memory of the sagebrush country

swings back to that smooth sage-gray canopy of cloud above, with the silvery gray-green of the sage spreading forward from my horse's feet, its fragrant tips just lisping against the stirrup leathers. Over beyond Kaibab, the prevailing purple shadows, lurking under the scant cover of the artemisia, give the sagebrush country a tone that calls for a descriptive term, the 'purple sage.' But the sage of California is, except for the brief greenness of early spring, of the color of the velo cloud blown in from the Kuro-Shiwa. It is better so, for the regions east of the meeting-place of the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada are all fire-colored, red and ocher and vermilion and coppery sulphurous green. In that triangular section fanning east toward the Rio Colorado, north into Nevada, including the gold fields of Tonopah, Bullfrog, and Rhyolite, and south across San Bernardino and Riverside counties to Imperial, the sagebrush holds all the higher levels, except the highest. There on the *cumbres* of the desert ranges rise the sinewy, thinly branched fox-tail pines,

cloud-nourished, manured by seldom snows. Sometimes even here the silvery sage, dwarfed by altitude, but otherwise unabashed, straggles thinly between the scattered pines. A little lower down the very color and bushy shape of the sagebrush is mimicked by the one-leaved *pinus edulis*, the piñon pine. This is the principal food crop of the wild desert tribes. There is a story told in the country of the piñon, that this sage-colored, round-headed pine was once a great *capitan*, a culture hero, who, in order that his death might benefit his people as much as his life, had himself translated into the foodful tree. Certainly, if you sit down by such a tree and sit long enough, you will see Indians. They might be Paiutes, looking for taboose in the bottoms of wet cañons, or gathering chia seed for bread; or Shoshones, of the southern bands, coming to burn baskets on the graves of their ancient dead; or Mohaves bringing their dead to burn, or to shoot doves by infrequent waterholes and catch great black-and-white-barred lizards in the crevices of the rocks.

There is little now left to the people of Lost Borders by which their tribal affinities may be recognized; the Shoshones are a little taller, perhaps, the Paiutes more friendly, and the Mohaves broader of face. But they are much intermarried, and are all pulled to one dreary likeness by the rags and tags of cast-off civilized dress. All of them look as though they might have been made on the spot out of the black rock, the brown sand and the dark water that collects in polished basins of porous lava rock.

Now and then the traveler in the sagebrush country of California meets a pocket hunter with his burro pack, or possibly a smart but dusty prospecting outfit. The *vaquero*, the cowboy associated by memory and romance with the sagebrush country, must be looked for farther east, on Kaibab, or in the San Juan country across the great gorge of the Colorado.

Very little rain gets past the heaven-raking crest of the Sierra Nevada; the most that falls is blown up from the Gulf of California along the draw created by the close

parallel desert ranges. It is precipitated usually under atmospheric conditions that produce violent drops and changes. All that the traveler is likely to find of it is in those rock reservoirs under the run-off of some bare granite cliff, or in the rare, persistent waterholes hollowed out by beasts or men, marked in the landscape by one lone tree, perhaps, or a clump of shrubby willows. Often there will be no mark at all except the frequency along the trail, of skeleton cattle or wild sheep, pointing all in one direction as they died on their way to the far-between drinking-places. There are districts in this back-door country where evaporation from the body is so rapid that death overtakes the chance prospector even with water in sight or in his canteen across his back. For years a notorious outlaw protected himself in the Death Valley region by filling in all the springs in a circle about the territory to which he had retreated. Beyond that waterless rim even the law could not penetrate.

And yet how the land repays the slightest moisture! Years when the Kuro-Shiwa

swings closer to our coast and the winds are friendly, I have seen all that country from Tehachapi, outside the wall, to San Gorgonio, one sheet of blue and gold. Seeds of a hundred tender annuals lie in the loose sand for years between the shrubby sage, their vitality unimpaired by the delayed resurrection of a chance wet spring. Often I have sifted the sand in my fingers looking for a sign of the life-giving principle which bursts so suddenly into beauty, without finding it. Yet after years in which there is no alteration in the aspect of the country, except the insensible change of the sage tints from gray to green and gray again, the miracle takes place, the blossomy wonder is upon the world again.

As a matter of fact, the sagebrush country is by no means the desert that it looks to the casual eye. Besides the social shrubs which have each their own blossom and seed time, even the driest years will afford a few blooms of crimson mallow and in the shelter of every considerable shrub some dwarfed and delicate phacelia or nemophila. Even out of

dunes which bury its hundred old trunks up to the new season's twigs, the mesquite will bear its sweet foodful pods.

If you know at what hours to look for it, wild life is never absent, but it is not ordinarily to be found by white men blundering about in broad noon. The coyotes may be seen there in daylight, trotting busily, often with an eye cocked to the circling buzzards lost almost beyond human sight in the vast blue. But if there be two or three of them, making a merry-go-round, you will see brother coyote making unerringly for the point which is the focus of their slowly narrowing rounds. In the higher levels of the sagebrush, toward Nevada or in the triangular corner of Arizona west of the Colorado, the resort of Wanted Men, where yellow pines and spruces may also be found occasionally clinging to the sides and bottoms of deep cañons, there are wolves, both fierce and cunning. Wolves are often more solitary than they seem, for they have also the coyote's gift of making their voices sound as if coming from several places at once. They are

more suspicious of man than is the little gray brother, never having done him such a service as the coyote did in bringing fire to the wild tribes. They will lie hid close to man's trail and let him pass unreckoning. Their favorite catch is young foals, but the mares — for this country is full of wild horses — will make a moving ring about their young, all the sharp hooves striking outward. It is safer for the wolf to strike the trail of a mare about to foal — a circumstance for which they have the same prescience that their fathers had for the same occurrence among buffalo — and catch the young as it is dropped, or, when the mare is down, tear out her flank with strong sharp jaws.

Always there is a war on between horse and cattle men and the wolves, for here on the high mesas toward the north and east the sagebrush is still serviceable to men. There are cougars here — a few — in the cañons and about the watering-places, ready to drop on the unsuspecting heifer or doe. But since Kaibab, the west rim of the Grand Cañon in Arizona, became sanctuary

for the deer, not many are found west of the palisades of the Virgin River.

One of the oddest finds in the sagebrush country east of the Sierras is a resting flock of water-birds, going north along the draws parallel to the watercourses; or to hear at dusk the heavy wing strokes of wild geese, or down along the middle Colorado, below the Grand Cañon, to watch eagles hunting ducks, teal and mallards and widgeon. Once riding at night in the land of little rain, my horse stumbled into a wing-weary flock of white sea-birds, wholly unfamiliar, covering half an acre, flat on the sand under the sage, and so dazed or fatigued that they scarcely moved from under his startled feet.

The higher sagebrush levels, as they begin to contest the ground with bunch grass and juniper, are visited by the bighorn during the winter months. There used to be well-marked trails across the sage leading from *cumbre* to *cumbre* of the desert ranges, where the bighorn and the deer passed from the summer pastures of the Sierras to the bunchgrass levels of the ranges beyond

Whitney and Kearsarge and the Mono Lake country. For years the ranchers who had unwittingly fenced across the deer trails would see them at the set time of the year floundering among the barbed wires, or, when alarmed, clearing between the lines, over or under, as swift and clean as an arrow.

It is in the lowest levels, the hollows of valleys, the sinks of ancient inland seas — where, between drouth and wind and shifting sand, the sage relinquishes space to the mesquite, the creosote, the smoke tree, and the ocotillo — that the most active and virulent life of the desert is found. Here, in the neighborhood of the infrequent *tinajas*, or tanks of lasting water, or by dripping springs, will be found tadpoles of the spotted toad, the desert turtle, *gopherus agassizii*, badgers, bobcats, all manner of seed-eating rats and mice, together with small hawks and owls that prey on these. Lizards dart everywhere — the ocellated sand lizard, shuffling its way in the wind-wave-marked sand with a swimming motion; the leopard lizard, swiftest of its kind, living upon that kind, swallowed

whole. The chuckwalla, one of the vegetarian lizards, that, with others of the phytophagous desert iguanas, nibbles the young buds of herbaceous bloom, and in turn becomes a succulent morsel for the Indians, can be recognized by its clumsy gait and its black-and-white bars. The gridiron-tailed lizard is easily identified by the tail curved over its back. Swifts dart everywhere, even to the top of the smoke trees, sunning themselves on the supple twigs of the mesquite. The whip-tail feeds on the crumbs about your camp, and the horned toad starts up from under your hand reaching for the delicate bloom of rediviva.

It is said that there are eight or ten kinds of snakes to be found in the country between the Rio Colorado and the Sierras of California, but I am not sure that I have seen more than three or four of them: the red racer, most widely distributed of desert snakes, two rattlers, one of them pale colored, of a species unidentified, and the little horned rattler, known locally as 'sidewinder.' His peculiar side-winding trail can

be found often in the clean sand, but it is only by great patience and skill that the trail-maker can be tracked to the hot bank, where he may be found coiled into the sand, flush with its surface, somnolent with heat. It is a part of the obligation of desert travelers to kill all venomous reptiles met, just as it is an equal obligation to protect all waterholes and leave them, if possible, in better condition than when found. But nowhere have the living denizens of any region better learned the art of self-concealment by protective coloring, thus giving to a district teeming with insect and vertebrate life the appearance of being abandoned to pure desertness.

If you asked any one, however, long acquainted with the open country back of the California Sierras, to catalogue the living things therein, he would without doubt give the desert winds among their number. I do not know how many winds there are, or if indeed there is but one ancient spirit of the air in a hundred metamorphoses. There is a slow inset of the vapor-laden breath of the

sea, beginning in the lost hours between the midnight and the morning sun, too high to be felt, made manifest by the velo cloud in skyward-reaching depths of aërial gloom. No breeze disturbs it, nor rain takes shape beneath its wings. Seldom it reaches beyond the eastern outposts of the Sierras, but serves as a veil to their loveliness long summer mornings. Through it the whiteness of the summit snow-bank shows and vanishes like the white wings of gulls in fog.

When there is no cloud veil along the eastward ranges, the sky lifts illimitably, the vault is clear metallic blue; little wafts of upper air skip and swoop, sometimes stirring the tips of the sage with a light wing, but oftener missing them by the height of a rider, lifting his hair, perhaps, but never the dust below his feet. By noon they are all gone to some dancing place of the upper heaven. Heat waves rise steadily in their stead, the breath draws heavily.

On the eastern slope of the California mountains there are always two short rainy seasons, or, in the high places, a summer

season of rain and a winter season of mingled rain and snow. Opposite the low places in the Sierra Wall, this summer rain can occasionally be seen from the western side as a dark nimbus. Although the rain in the sagebrush country comes up from the south on the Colorado cloud stream, it usually begins in the north and works toward the south, the extreme south often receiving no rain at all.

When no rain comes, the land dreams of the sea, and covering the unrained-on space with shining ghosts of waters. Morning and mid-afternoon the rivers of mirage arise, they well out of the past and are poured trembling on the plain, phantom fogs blow across them, wraiths of trees grow up and are reflected in false streams. Often in very early light there are strange suggestions of — dunes and boulders, perhaps? Only no boulders in that country are flat-topped like the houses built in lands of the sun, and no dunes are wall-sided. Mirage, we are told, is but a picture of distant things, mirrored on atmospheric planes, but then maybe a

ghost is only a mirage deflected on our atmosphere from worlds outside our ken, and it is always easy in the desert to see things that you cannot possibly believe. Whatever they are, mirages are real to the eye. I mean that they are not to be winked away nor dissipated by contact. I have watched a *vaquero* ride into one of them and drown to all appearances, or seem to be swimming his horse across its billows, all of him below its surface as completely hidden as by rivers of water. Moreover, mirages tend always to occur under given conditions and in the same places. I recall one of the stations on the old Mojave stage road which, approached from the north about an hour after sunrise, would instantly duplicate: two houses, two lines of poplars, two high corrals. At Indian Wells, I have seen the moon mirage, rolling like quicksilver in the hollow of the valley, parting about the reefs of black rock and streaming in long bays and estuaries out of sight among the surrounding ranges.

In all that country one is seldom removed from a suggestion of the sea, though there is

nothing harder to come by than water for any purpose. The contours are all billowy; rank on rank of hills rise out of the plain like gray-backed breakers; the sagebrush gives them a sea shimmer. The valleys are narrow and trough-like; their shores are lined with crawling dunes that, under the pressure of constant wind currents, are forever sliding up their own peaks and down on the other side. Around Turtle Mountain the sand spouts up like a fountain and cascades in silvery veils; long taluses of white sand are rippled in wave marks like storm-beaten beaches. There are not wanting evidences of old inland seas here that, like Salton, filled intermittently and dried again in fine, floury particles of salt and bitter minerals. And along their shores are potshards, blackened hearthstones and kitchen middens of a nameless people. Here in the intramontane valleys of the easterly Sierras rather than along the Pacific fronting littoral, lies the trial of the prehistoric migration of tribes toward the southern extremity of the continent. The records of their passing are scored into

isolated lava flows far from the foodful oaks and waters of the coast, or on the dark faces of wall-sided box cañons far over the heads of the occasional prospectors who report them. Other pictographs, sacred signs, counts of the kill, war records, travel directions for succeeding passages, mere scribblings of man's perpetual business of self-expression, can be traced on rocks that afterward lay for centuries under alkaline lakes, where now only the blue lizard pants in the hot sun. This way the Navajos came to harry the sedentary Pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico. Earlier some of the ancestral Pueblo clans themselves passed, carrying legendary memories of Arctic tundras, or of receding Ice-ages and earth fires and tremblings survived in their long search for Earth's Sacred Middle where they felt obligated to dwell. Perhaps earlier still the tribes who found on the uplands of old Mexico the god-grass — *teosinte* — parent of the many colored maize, lingered by the dwindling waterholes of the sagebrush country. Even when one makes allowances for the progressive desiccation of the continental slope of the

Sierras, and the possibility that waterholes were more plentiful and rainfall more frequent in the days of the great tribal trek, the mere evidence of early man in the sagebrush country gives new color to our concept of him. Seed-eater he must have been — even yet his modern descendant gathers his bread from the low-growing herbs and the no more than man-high shrubs — companion of the lesser beasts, earth-loving and undaunted by great outlooks and wide open spaces. Of how long the tribes who produced the great town-building cultures of the Americas lingered in the Sierra sagebrush country, even the ethnologists have only a guess. One has but to linger here again on the clean dust and amid the clean-smelling sage, making the leisurely *paseo* from waterhole to waterhole, all open to the wind and stars, to regain that subtle sympathy for growing things by which they later led the country grass up to become the six-colored corn.

One can still trace here, about stopped springs, by the foodful plants that spring there from chance-dropped seed, the loca-

tion of more recently abandoned Indian camps. And, by the birds and small mammals who follow man-scattered food plants, have illuminating glimpses of the process by which the wild was unconsciously subdued to the uses of man. Here, too, the wandering tribes must have begun to form their image of the Plumed Serpent out of the swift flash of wings surprised about the waterholes, and the guardian snakes that coiled there, and the serpent darting lightning from the rainy skies. But the only myth I know which belongs to the sagebrush country, spreading along the eastern Sierra base, east into Nevada, and south to where the sagebrush begins to be replaced by creosote, mesquite, and cactus, reaches indefinitely back to the time when man ran the red deer down and threw it, as the cowboy throws a steer, with a twist of the branching horns. Thus one of their ancient hunting heroes chased the deer across the mesa, over the blue hills that rim the eastern edge of the world, and into the morning sky, where, in the summer dawnings, you can see them, hunter and deer, low and white as the Deer Star on the desert rim.

Over near the palisades of Virgin River, where the plateaus of the Colorado Grande break off suddenly to the California desert, there are traces of another great trek, circling back from the Gila and Verde Rivers; ruins of great pueblos, walled and terraced, with deep underground ceremonial chambers, and the snake of the waterholes grown to be a feathered serpent god. But the Navajos, who came to the sagebrush country centuries later, made a surpassing being of that other late comer the horse, a turquoise-colored horse, blue as the morning, pawing the sun-gilt sands. That luminous golden haze which gathers along the sunrise horizon is the 'dust of glittering sand which conceals from too curious eyes the passing of the turquoise horse of Johancu.' Somehow or other all our own tradition of the sagebrush country gathers about that gallant animal; horses and horsemanship, free life, great space, lift and release. Color and smell of the sagebrush, windy light and crisping soil beneath, they stand, not for themselves, but for a memorable and precious quality of experience.

THE HIGH SIERRAS

THE HIGH SIERRAS

THE proper vehicle for mountain study is not yet available. A great mountain range is like a great public character; there is much more to it than is presented to the observation, and it is not open to familiarity. But if one could fly high and wide over its cloud-lifting summits, one might learn something of its private relations.

From such a vantage it would instantly appear how distinct are the Nevadas (*nieve*, snowy) among the Sierras of California. A very Bonaparte of mountains, newborn and lording it over the ancient ranges, not content with its vast empery, but swinging north into the unpreëmpted icy regions. San Bernardino and San Jacinto are as far from it as the Faubourg Saint-Germain from an island in the sea. Sierra Madre is of the Cordilleras, Shasta a firehole, a revolutionist. The true Sierra is the midriff of a continent. From its northern extremity one sees the sun in a circle

and the Northern Lights; that portion of it that we know as Sierra Nevada swings into the State above Honey Lake and ends southward in a tumble of blunt peaks below Kern River. This is quite enough, however, for Californians to make free with and more than they can appreciate.

Geographically the range begins on the south at Tehachapi, but at Walker's Pass, a day's journey to the north, is the first appearance of its most salient characteristic, the great Sierra Fault. In its youth the range suffered incredible cataclysms. For two hundred miles the great eastern plain dropped; weighted as it was with its withered aristocracy of hills — how weazened and old you can see, to this day — it tore sharply downward, and the depth of that fall from the heaven-affronting peak of Whitney to the desert valley of Inyo is a matter of two miles of sheer descent.

The whole Sierra along the line of faultage has the contour of a wave about to break. It swings up in long water-shaped lines from the valley of the San Joaquin and rears its jagged

crest above the abrupt desert shore. Seen from close under, some of these two- and three-thousand-foot precipices have the pitch of toppling waters. As they rose new-riven from the earth their proportions must have been more than terrifying.

Later the Ice Age bore downward from the north and through immeasurable years carved the fractured granite into shapes of enduring beauty. It rounded the great jutting fronts, it insured them against the tooth of time with the keen icy polish with which they shine still against the morning. It gouged narrow wall-sided cañons, cut the course of rivers, and, sinking like a graver's tool into the heart of the range, scooped out deep wells of pleasantness. Afterward, when the ice was old, it must have moved more slowly, for the lines it left, retreating northward, were more flowing, the hill crowns rounder. And then the mountain was besieged with trees. They stormed it, scaled its free precipices — you can see by the thick mould of the valleys what ranks and ranks of them went down, and along the snow line how by the persistence of assault they are bent and contorted.

This is the whole effect of the somber swathes of pine that mask the Sierra slopes. They march — along the watercourses they climb — up sheer precipices in staggering files, trooping in the passes; across the smooth meadow spaces they lock arms, they await the word of command. By a very little observation they are seen to be ranged in orderly companies. Here a warm current of air traveling steadily from the superheated valleys carries the life zone higher, there a defiant bony ridge drops it a few thousand feet, but the relative arrangement of species does not greatly vary. The broad oaks, like reverend grandsires, from the foothills see the procession go by; they follow it as far as the gates of the mountain, crutched and bowed. All the lower cañons are full of a rabble of deciduous trees, chinquapins, scrub oak, madroño, full of gay camp-followers, lilac, dogwood, azaleas, strumpet pentstemons, flaunting lupines, monkshood, columbine.

The gray nut pine, wide-branched, unwarlike but serviceable, opens the ranks of conifers. Then the long-leaved pines begin,

ponderosa, *Coulteri*, and the slender, arrowy, fire-resisting *attenuata*. On the western slope, increasing as it goes northward, the redwood holds all the open country, but it is no climber like *monticola*, the largest of all true pines, the captain of the Sierra forests. The firs assume the water borders and low moraines; clannish, incommunicable, they seem not to find it worth while to grow unless they grow statelily. Above all these rise the thin-barked pines, the lodgepole, Douglas spruce, *libocedrus*, and the hardy junipers in windy passes. About the meadows and lake borders the quaking asps push like children between the knees along the line, and highest, most persistent, the creeping-limbed, wind-depressed white-barked pine, under whose matted boughs the wild sheep bed.

The trees have each its own voice — a degree of flexibility or length of needles upon which the wind harps to produce its characteristic note. The traveler in the dark of mountain nights knows his way among them as by the street cries of his own city. The creaking of the firs, the sough of the long-

leaved pines, the whispering whistle of the lodgepole pine, the delicate *frou-frou* of the redwoods in a wind — these come out for him in the darkness with the night scent of moth-haunted flowers. But there is one tree that for the footer of the mountain trails is voiceless; it speaks, no doubt, but it speaks only to the austere mountain heads, to the mindful wind and the watching stars. It speaks as men speak to one another and are not heard by the little ants crawling over their boots. This is the 'big tree,' the sequoia. In something less than a score of forest patches, about the rim of the Twin Valleys, the sequoia abides, out of some possible preglacial period, out of some past of which nothing is left to us but the fading memory of the 'giants in those days.' The age of individual big trees can be computed in terms of human history. There are evidences written in the rings of these that they endured the drouth which made the famine in the days of Ahab the king, against which Elijah prayed. These are growing trees whose seeds are fertile.

One might make a very dramatic colloca-

tion of the rise and fall of empires against the life period of a single sequoia, and that would be easier than to transcribe by mere phrases the impression of one of these green towers of silence on the sense. Single and deeply corrugated as a Corinthian column, with only a lightly branched crown for a capital, they spire for five thousand years or so, and then the leaf crown becomes rounded to a dome in which the winds breed. Warm days of spring, their young nestling zephyrs come fluttering down the deep wells of shade to shake the saplings of a hundred years. In summer the fine-leafed foliage catches the sun like spray, diffusing vaporous blueness. But the majesty of their gigantic trunks is incommunicable; after a while the stifling sense of awe breaks before it, and you go on with your small affairs as children will go on playing even in the royal presence.

The name *Sequoia* is one of the few cheering notes among our habitual botanical stupidities; an attempt to express quality as it is humanly measured in a name. There was once an American Cadmus, Sequoyah, a

Cherokee who invented an Indian alphabet and taught his tribe to read. Seeing them outnumbered in their own territory, he started west with the idea of founding a great Indian empire. He was last seen trailing north across the desert and was heard of no more. Tradition has it that he reached the forest of the Upper Kern River and gave the trees his name. At least no botanist with his nose in a book has usurped it.

Forests are for cover. They mask not only the naked rock, but the paths of deer and bear and bighorn. A world of furtive folk goes on under the spire-pointed ranks of conifers that look black from above, verging to blueness. A world of birds is in its branches, squirrels nimble as sparrows; but scarcely anything of this is visible to the watcher on the heights. Rabbits playing on your lawn would be more noticeable in proportion than the seldom seen bighorn leading his lightfoot young from ledge to rocky ledge. The jealous trees cover the trails and obscure the passes.

As you come up through them you observe the flat soddy spaces of old lake basins, green

as jewels, and the hanging meadows gay with cascades of flowers, the stream tangles, the new-made moraines bright with bindweed and sulphur flower. But from the heights all this lovely detail is hidden by the overlapping tents of boughs. Here and there a stream leaps forth at the falls like a sword from a green scabbard, or higher up may be traced as the silver wire on which are strung unrippled lakes as blue as cobalt. Great chains of such lakes lead down from the snow line to the foothill borders, encroached upon by the silent ranks of trees. As they go down they show soddy borders, they tend to fill and to grow meadows where presently deep-rooting trees assume their stations. This is the strategic rule for the taking of a granite mountain. First the grinding ice and the disintegrating water. What the streams wash down collects in the glacier-ploughed basins. It makes lake borders by which the grass comes in — the small grass that is mightier than mountains, that eats them for its food. Lakes at the lower levels become meadows; then trees arrive; they overrun the soddy ground, the

snow-manured moraines. The trees themselves take centuries to fruition. At a later stage men dispossess the forest and build cities, but that has not yet happened to the Sierras. There is something indomitable in the will of the trees to spread and climb. In the floor of Yosemite and Hetch Hetchy there are hundred-year-old oaks of full form and generous growth, and on the slopes above them the same oaks and of almost the same age are so dwarfed by drouth and altitude that they are not knee-high to a man, but they keep the due proportions of their type. A white-bark pine will climb where the weight of the winter drifts is so heavy that it is never able to lift its decumbent trunk from the ground, but must cling like ivy to the wall in which it roots.

In the spring the rich florescence of the conifers sheds pollen in drifts that, carried down the melting waters, warns the sheep herder and the orchardist, a hundred miles away, of the advancing season. A pine forest in flower is one of the things worth seeing which is most seldom seen, for when the pine

bloom is at its best the high passes are still choked by snow, the lakes ice-locked, the trails dangerous. And then the blossoms, yellow and crimson tassels and rosy spathes, are carried on the leafy crowns high over the heads of the most adventurous foresters. What one finds, as late as the end of June when the trails are open, is a stain of pollen on the lingering snow, and great clouds of it flying wherever a bough is brushed by a light wing. In the autumn the whole wood is full of the click and glint of the winged seeds. Storms of them, like clouds of locusts, are carried past on the wind to be dropped in the nearest clearing or to find a chance lodging in a moss-lined crevice of the weathered headlands.

But from the heights all feeling for the process of the forest is lost in the sense of its irresistible march; it creeps and winds, it waits darkly for the word. Above the tree line no sound ascends but a faint vibration, the body of sound making itself felt in the silence. On windless days the forest lies black, like weed at the bottom of a lake of air

as clear as a vacuum. When the great wind rivers pour about the peaks, it can be seen lashing like weed in the currents, but still almost soundlessly; the roar of it passes down the cañons and is heard in the cities of the plain. But if the peaks cannot hear what the trees are plotting about, it is not so with the voices of the water. These are sharper, more definitive; they rise reëchoing from the rocky walls and are recognizable each by its distinctive note at incredible heights of the sheer glassy, granite frontlets.

In the glacial valleys, such as Yosemite, Tehipite, and Hetch Hetchy, where young rivers drop from the headlands in long streaming falls, the noise of them contending with the wind makes mimic thunder. Immense curtains of falling water are tossed this way and that; they are caught up and suspended in mid-air and let fall crashing to the lower levels. When the wind blows straight up the cañon, they will rear against it, and leap out a shining arc shattering in mid-air like bursting bombs of spray. But later in the season, when the streams are heavy with the melt-

ing snows, the wind itself is shattered by the weight of falling water, it exhausts itself in obscuring clouds of silver dust. When from Whitney or Williamson or Kings Mountain you can see half a hundred such young rivers roaring to the morning, it is as beautiful and as terrifying as the sight of youth to timorous age. They go leaping with their shining shields and their shouting shakes the rocks. Neither you nor they believe that the most and the best they will come to is an irrigating canal between sober rows of prunes and fields of barley.

Higher than the forests or the waters, rising out of them, is the *Py-weack*, the Land of Shining Rocks. They shine with glacier polish; horses on the high trails sniff suspiciously at their glittering surfaces. Time can lay slight hold on them; by thunder, by frost, and the little gray moss it has not yet subdued the front of Oppapago. Here between snowless ribs and buttresses are the fields that feed the streams, and shrunken glaciers, little toy models of the ancient rivers of ice. The snow fields of the Sierras

are not so inconsiderable as they seem; they are dwarfed by the precipices among which they hide. Inaccessible to ordinary mountain travel, they make their best showing from the surrounding plains, where, lifted in the middle air, they glow with ethereal whiteness. Close by, they make a bewildering waste of broken ice, boulders, and crevasses, made bleaker by the cobalt shadows.

North, the line of peaks stretches, broken by the passes that give access to the West. Between them, above the source of streams, in the ice-gouged hollows lie unfathomable waters that take all their life from the sky. Or perhaps they are reservoirs from which the sky is made, fluid jade and azulite and hyacinth and chrysoprase, as if the skies of many days had run their colors in those bleak bowls. For at this altitude the wave contour of the range comes out most sharply; the sky is strangely deep and darker as if through its translucence one glimpsed the void of space. One sees the moon and the planets wandering in it with pale lamps.

No life of any sort is visible from here.

Farther down toward the coast, over the forested moraines, the condor may be seen leaning against the wind at sunrise. On the edge of the abysmal cañons eagles make their nests and go dropping down their shadowy depths to seek their food from God; but even eagles do not rise to these stark heights. Sometimes a clanging horde of water fowl, beating up from the Gulf of California overland to the Canadian marshes, will grow bewildered in the face of the great wall-sided cliffs; circling they attempt the forward flight only to circle and rise anew, until, wing-weary in that thin air, they sink exhausted to the margin of a mountain lake satisfied at last to thread their way humbly along the creek beds to open country.

The live forces of the High Sierra are the forces of wind and light. One feels the push of tremendous currents flowing between the peaks as among rocky islands. Day by day they may be charted by the cloud fragments floating on them, by the banners of dry snow dust, streaming out like long grass from the island shores. Thundering fleets of cumuli

drift up the wind rivers and assault the great domes of Whitney and Oppapago. The light breaks through all the varying cloud strata and colors them with splendor; the glow of the clouds reflected on the snow is caught by the watchful mountain-lover far down the valleys of Inyo and San Joaquin. This painted hour of sunset is the apotheosis of mountains, but for me it has less of majesty than the morning after deep snows. These come usually early in the season. The air for days will be full of the formless stir; then the range withdraws itself behind a veil which closes from tented peak to peak, and includes sometimes the parallel desert ranges which lie along its eastern coast. Twenty feet will fall in a single session of the white gods behind the veil. Then comes a morning blue and sharp as a spear thrust. Every tree is like an arrow feathered in green and white. Airy bridges built upon the bending stems, shut in the watercourses, the moraines are smooth and soft as the backs of huddled sheep. By night the range is a procession of winged figures holding the snows upon their bosoms.

And that, after all, is the business of mountains.

One of the mysteries of human nature is its capacity for being affected in what we call its spiritual capacities by the mere aspect of things. All this line and mass and color and intricate lovely detail produces in those who look upon it strange reactions, incitements to activity which we recognize as the thing to be expected of mountains. There is a curious psychological state known as 'mountain fear.' It comes over the presumptuous stranger who ventures unprepared into its vastness. He may be in no danger of life or limb, well fed, well defended from anything the mountain as mere physical environment can do to him. He may be perfectly shod, provided with maps, loaded for bear, furnished with fire and bread and salt, and suddenly the very bowels of him quake with unreasoning terror. O that the hills would fall upon him and hide him! I have heard old mountaineers, forest rangers, and sheep men seeking out untrodden meadows for their flocks, say that this mysterious fear will come upon them in the broad day,

as appreciable, as obvious as the chill which precedes a storm, and as mysteriously be lifted. Then there is the effect of mountains upon man called 'Holy.' Was not Jehovah worshiped on high places, and the law handed down from Sinai? All our literature and our mythology is charged with attempts to translate this singular impression of personality in the wild, in trees and rivers and rocks, and especially in mountains. In such personal aspects the effect of the High Sierras is benign. High on our horizon it broods and hovers, it covers us with its wings. It is the mother not only of lands and waters; it is the source of that high confidence in their destiny and the purposeful friendliness of the Powers which characterizes the peoples of the West.

THE END

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